BOOK II OF III

TWILIGHT™

♦ HOWARD CHAYKIN ♦ JOSÉ LUIS GARCIA-LOPÉZ ♦
STEVE OLIFF

Every single moment in Man's history is just chock full of the inescapable duality of our capacity for self-adoration tempered with a healthy dollop of self-loathing. We build Tabernacles soaring heavenward, beseeching gods cut from his own cloth—then raze these mighty Cathedrals to the ground. Man was, is, and always will be a roiling sea of souls who tire of the old pantheon, ever hungry for a new and improved deity.

Karel accidentally handed Humanity Forever . . . and Mankind worshipped the very ground she hovered over. Her name was whispered in reverent hushes across the universe, and more blood was spilled over the pronunciation of her name than in all wars in Mankind's previous history. Conquered Worlds bathed in the radiant splendor of her image. Karel loved being Goddess.

And from the dark, Tommy Tomorrow cursed her name, despoiled her image, and murdered her Worshippers and Pilgrims. Tommy felt he'd been robbed of the Olympian spotlight he so richly deserved—so he maimed, raped and destroyed planets in frustration. If Tommy Tomorrow couldn't be the messiah, he'd be the Anti-Christ.

No wonder Brenda divorced him.

From *The Oral Diaries of Homer Glint*

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◆TWILIGHT◆

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TWILIGHT

◆ BOOK II ◆

◆ LORDS ◆ OF THE ◆ LONG ◆ SHADOW

I'LL KILL YOU, YOU LITTLE RAT'S NEST-- I SWEAR...

...IF YOU DON'T STOP CAROMING AROUND THE ROOM, I'LL GO NUTS AS WELL AS BLIND!

I DIDN'T MAKE YOU MY SEEING-EYE CAT FOR--

TO HELL WITH YOU, HOMER-- YOU KNOW WHAT CATNIP DOES TO ME--

Tinkll Tinkkl

--YOU WANT TO RELAX, TAKE THE DAMNED PINS OUT OF MY HEAD--

--SOMETIMES EVEN AN OLD CAT'S GOT TO ROMP.

OH, COME ON--YOU KNOW I DON'T HAVE YOUR EQUILIBRIUM...

...YOU'RE MAKING ME SEASICK, DAMN IT--

tinkkl

--STOP SHAKING YOUR HEAD--

LIKE I SAID, HOMES--

--YOU'RE THE ONE NEEDS THE PINS--NOT ME--

--YOU'RE THE ONE NEEDS MY EYES TO SEE THROUGH--

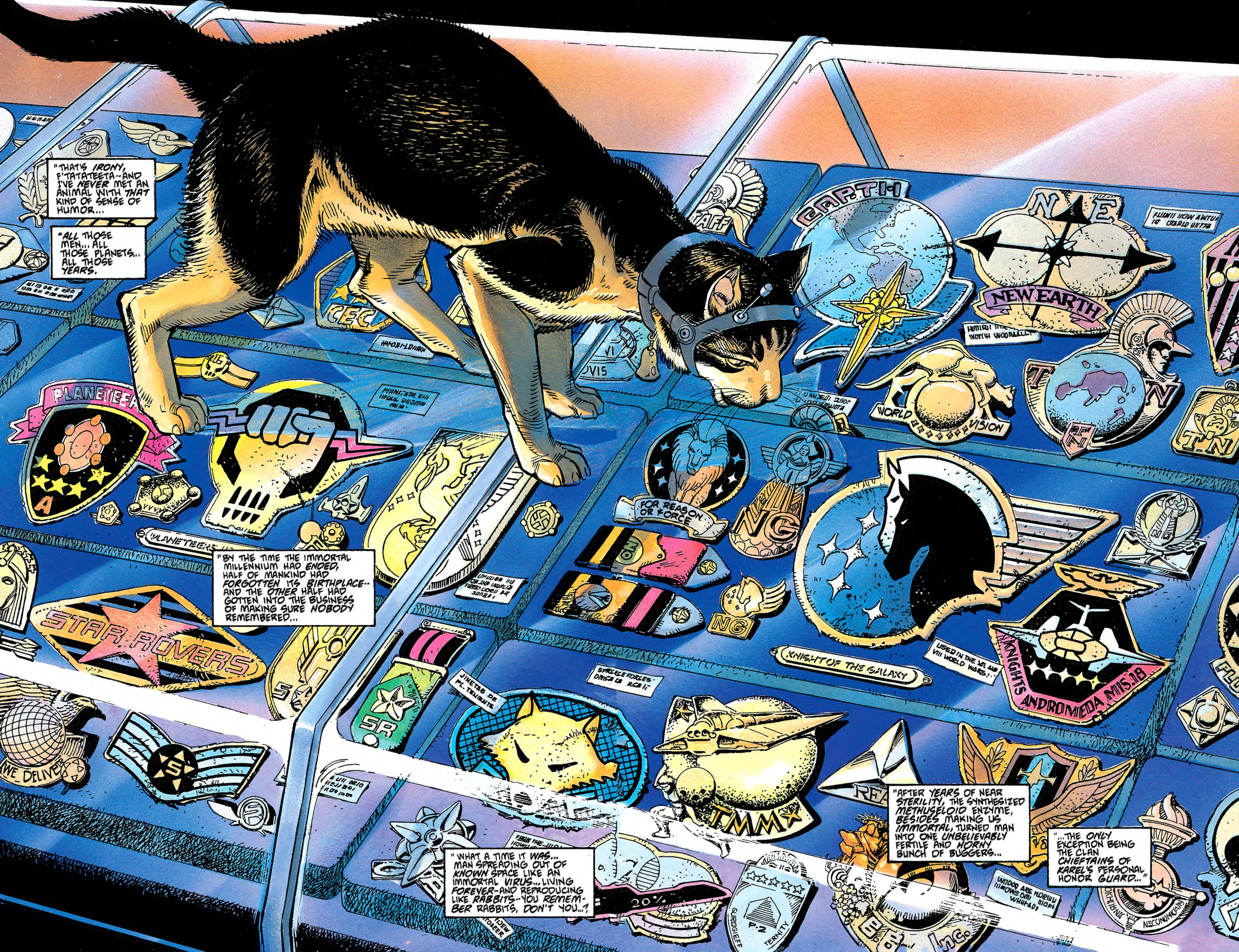
--YOU GOT TO TAKE THE BAD WITH THE GOOD, SOME--

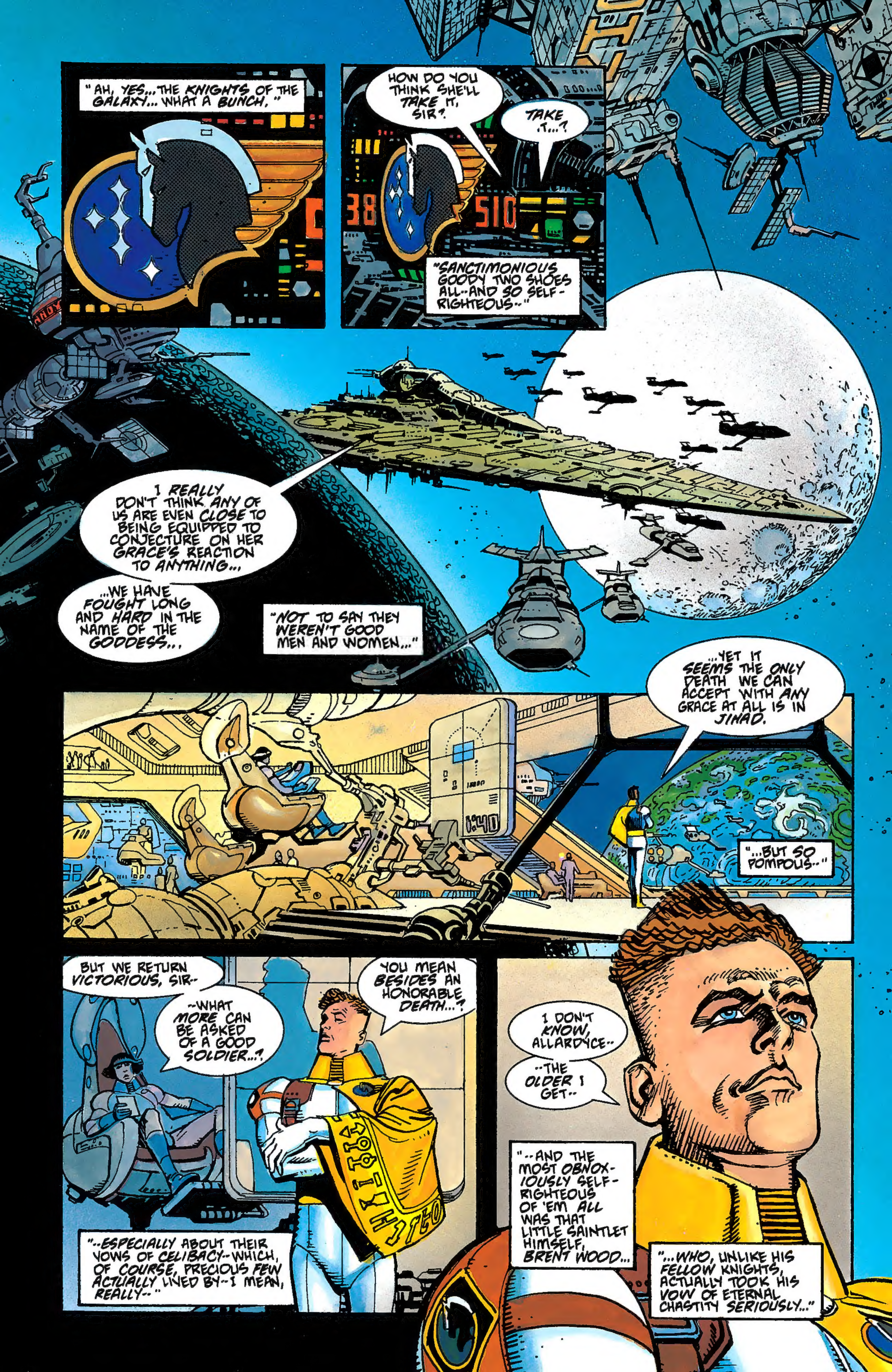
Tinkkll Tinkkll

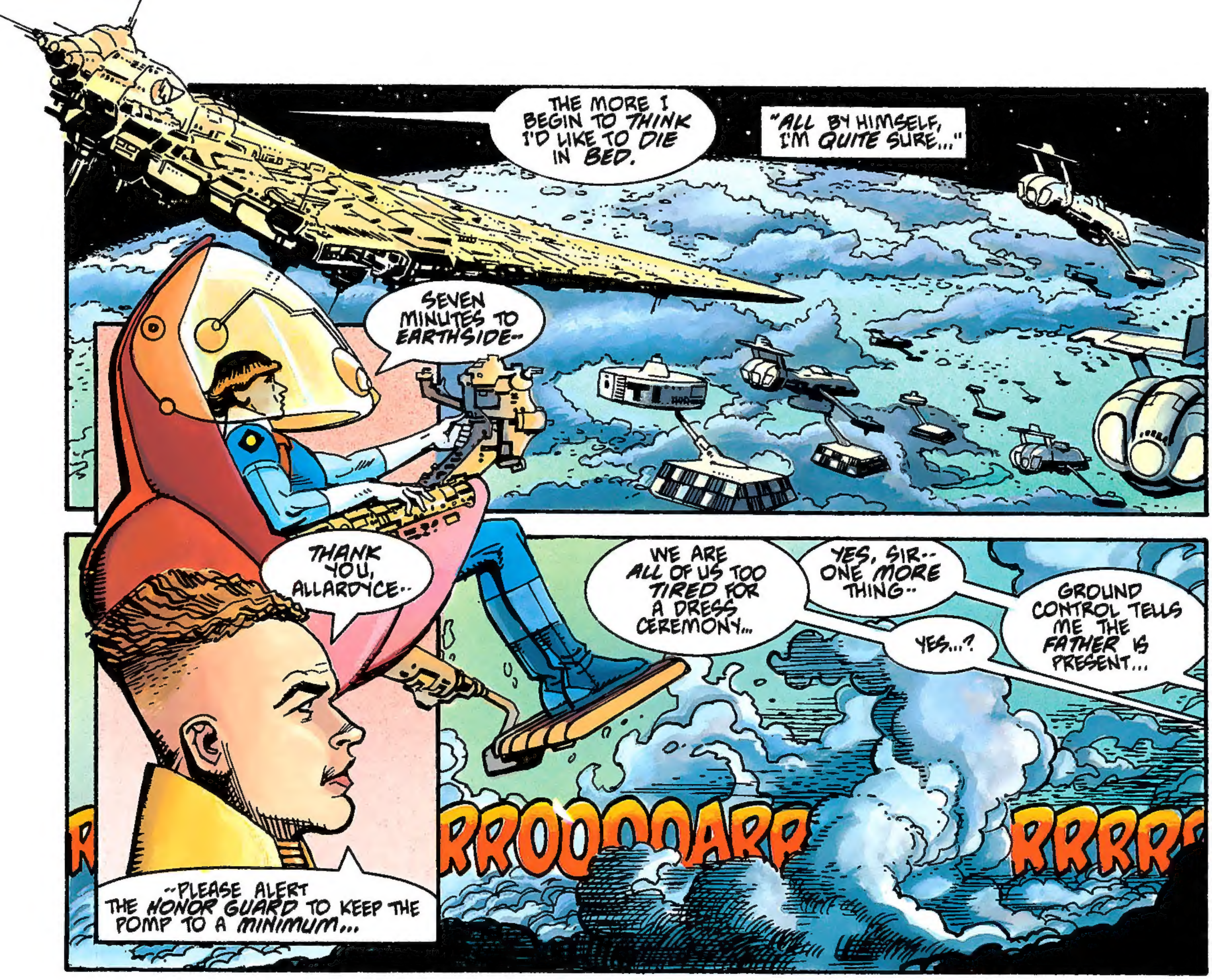
AFTER ALL I'VE DONE FOR YOU, F'TATATEETA--

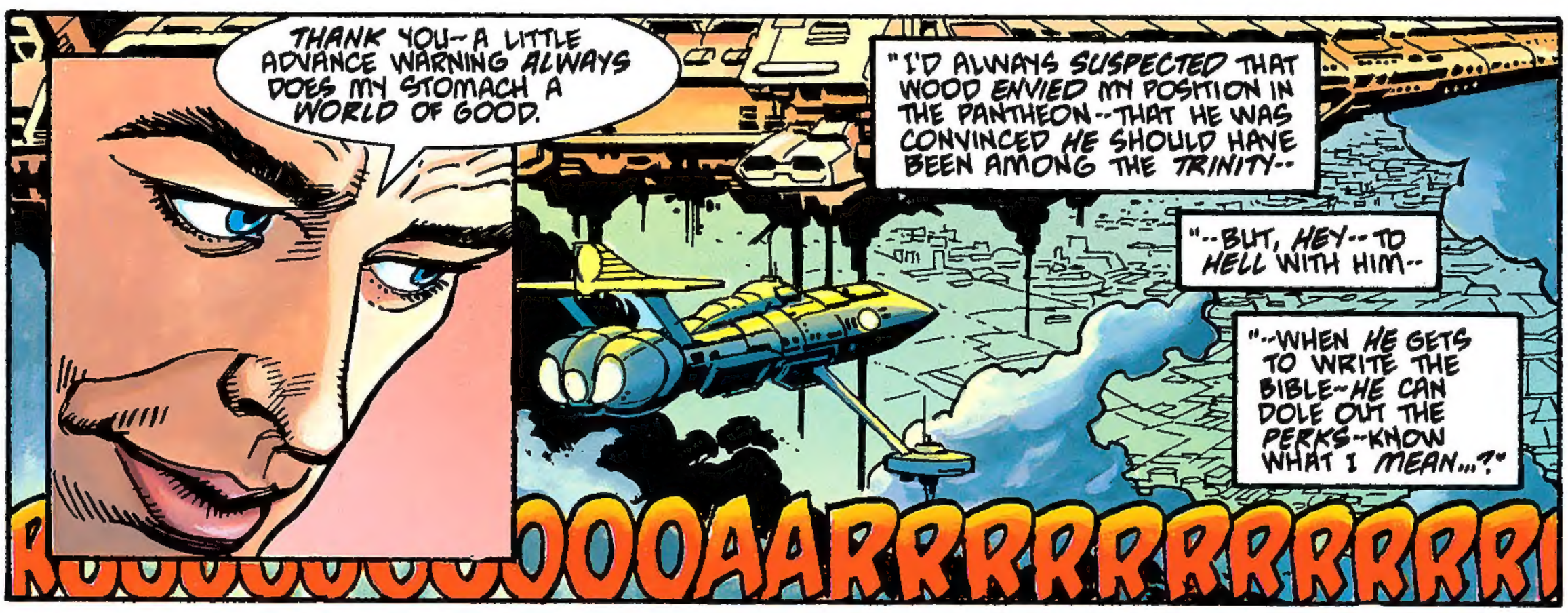
--TREATED YOU LIKE A BROTHER--

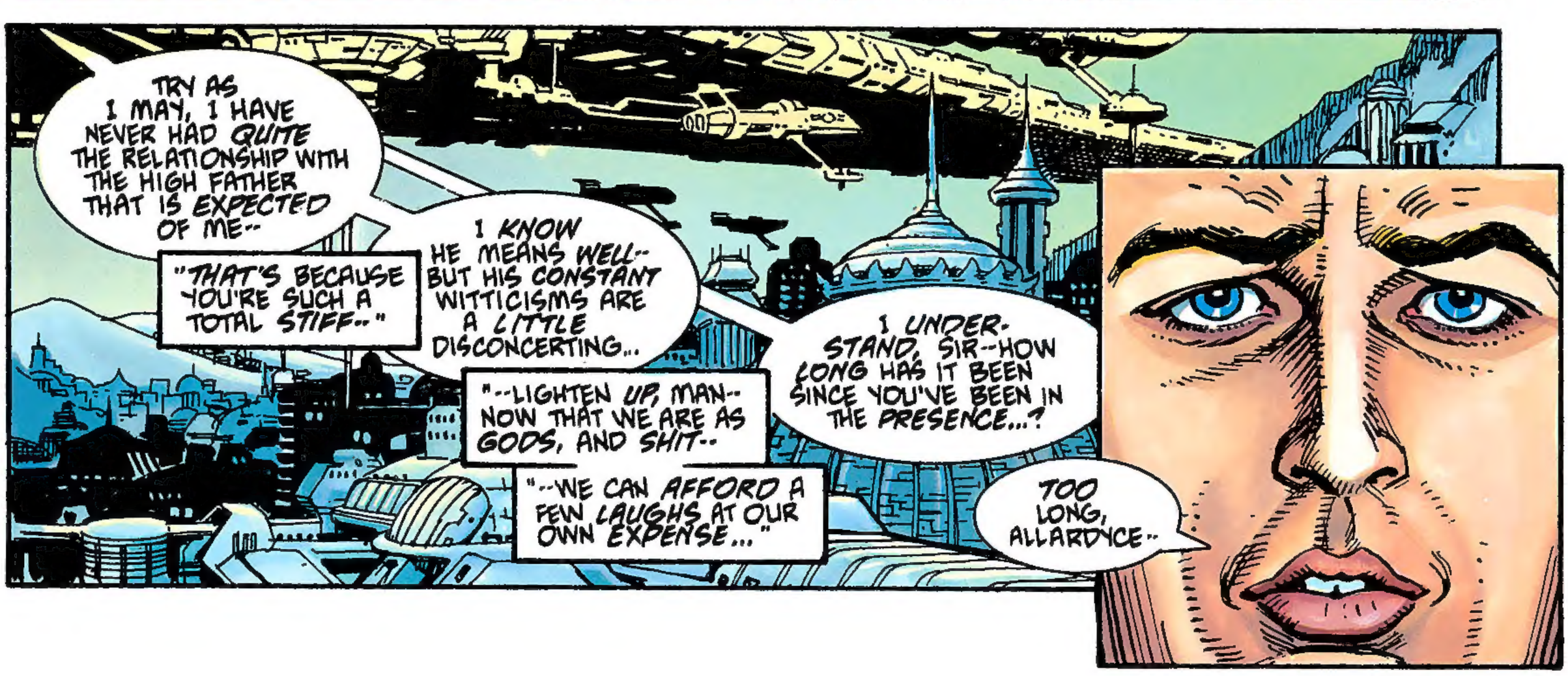
YOU'RE BREAKING :scarf: MY HEART :smack: REALLY :chomp: NO KIDD-- :chomp:--
--YOU GOTTA LAY IN MORE :smack: OF THIS BRAN--
I'LL BREAK MORE THAN YOUR HEART, YOU UNGRATEFUL LITTLE SHIT--
--JUST LET'S NOT FORGET WHO SAVED YOUR WRETCHED MEWING LITTLE LIFE WHEN--
Tinkll Tinn Tinn
Tinkll Tinkll
SPEAKING OF HEARTS-- EASY, OLD BOY--
--CHASING ME AROUND HAS BEEN ENOUGH EXERTION FOR YOU THIS WEEK--
--I MEAN, TAKE A LOOK AT YOURSELF--
NO KIDDING-- I LOOK LIKE LIVING HELL--
I'LL SAY-- ACCENT ON THE HELL PART--
--WHY DON'T YOU TAKE A FLOP IN YOUR COMFY CHAIR--
--AND I'LL CURL UP IN YOUR LA--
GOD DAMNIT-- WHAT DO I PAY THESE PEOPLE FOR--?!?
WHAT-- WHAT-- WHAT ?!?!
HOMER-- LET'S WATCH THAT BLOOD PRESSURE--
I PAY THAT BLOODY APE A FORTUNE TO KEEP THIS PLACE TIDY--
--JUST BECAUSE I'M BLIND, THEY THINK THEY CAN GET AWAY WITHOUT DUSTING--
--Hmmm... MY, MY... IT'S BEEN YEARS SINCE I LOOKED AT THESE--SO MANY EARTHS-- SO LITTLE TIME--
I DON'T GET IT...

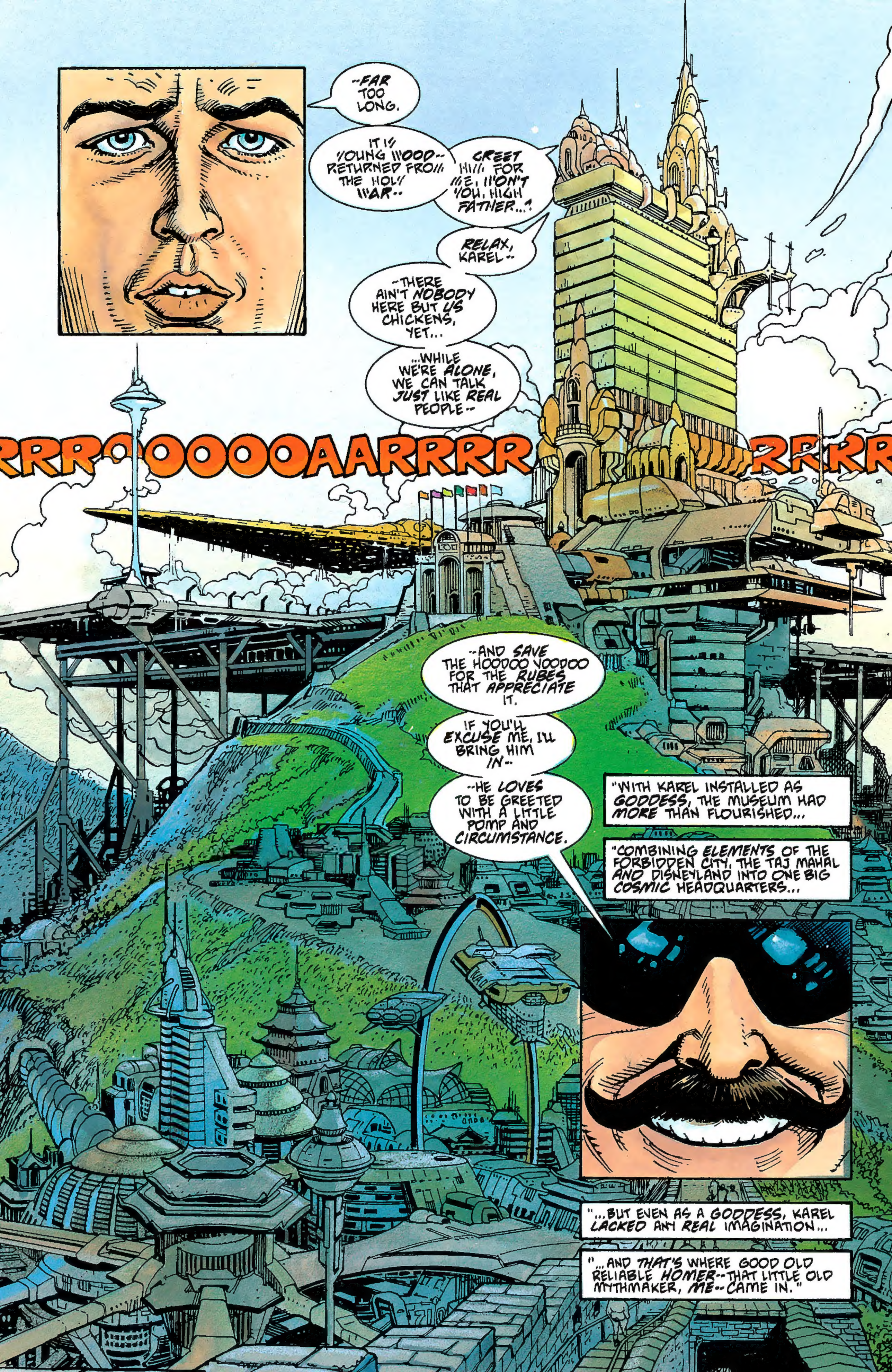

"THAT'S IRONY, F'TATATEETA--AND I'VE NEVER MET AN ANIMAL WITH THAT KIND OF SENSE OF HUMOR...
"ALL THOSE MEN... ALL THOSE PLANETS... ALL THOSE YEARS.
EARTH
NEW EARTH
WORLD VISION
PLANETEERS
STAR ROVERS
"BY THE TIME THE IMMORTAL MILLENNIUM HAD ENDED, HALF OF MANKIND HAD FORGOTTEN ITS BIRTHPLACE.. AND THE OTHER HALF HAD GOTTEN INTO THE BUSINESS OF MAKING SURE NOBODY REMEMBERED...
FOR REASON OR FORCE
KNIGHT OF THE GALAXY
KNIGHTS ANDROMEDA
"WHAT A TIME IT WAS... MAN SPREADING OUT OF KNOWN SPACE LIKE AN IMMORTAL VIRUS... LIVING FOREVER-AND REPRODUCING LIKE RABBITS--YOU REMEMBER RABBITS, DON'T YOU...?
"AFTER YEARS OF NEAR STERILITY, THE SYNTHESIZED METHUSELOID ENZYME, BESIDES MAKING US IMMORTAL, TURNED MAN INTO ONE UNBELIEVABLY FERTILE AND HORNY BUNCH OF BUGGERS...
"...THE ONLY EXCEPTION BEING THE CLAN CHIEFTAINS OF KAREL'S PERSONAL HONOR GUARD..."


"AH, YES... THE KNIGHTS OF THE GALAXY... WHAT A BUNCH."
HOW DO YOU THINK SHE'LL TAKE IT, SIR?
TAKE IT...?
"SANCTIMONIOUS GOODY TWO SHOES ALL--AND SO SELF-RIGHTEOUS--"
I REALLY DON'T THINK ANY OF US ARE EVEN CLOSE TO BEING EQUIPPED TO CONJECTURE ON HER GRACE'S REACTION TO ANYTHING...
...WE HAVE FOUGHT LONG AND HARD IN THE NAME OF THE GODDESS...
"NOT TO SAY THEY WEREN'T GOOD MEN AND WOMEN..."
...YET IT SEEMS THE ONLY DEATH WE CAN ACCEPT WITH ANY GRACE AT ALL IS IN JIHAD.
"...BUT SO POMPOUS--"
BUT WE RETURN VICTORIOUS, SIR--
--WHAT MORE CAN BE ASKED OF A GOOD SOLDIER...?
YOU MEAN BESIDES AN HONORABLE DEATH...?
"--ESPECIALLY ABOUT THEIR VOWS OF CELIBACY--WHICH, OF COURSE, PRECIOUS FEW ACTUALLY LIVED BY--I MEAN, REALLY--"
I DON'T KNOW, ALLARDYCE--
--THE OLDER I GET--
"--AND THE MOST OBNOXIOUSLY SELF-RIGHTEOUS OF 'EM ALL WAS THAT LITTLE SAINTLET HIMSELF, BRENT WOOD...
"...WHO, UNLIKE HIS FELLOW KNIGHTS, ACTUALLY TOOK HIS VOW OF ETERNAL CHASTITY SERIOUSLY..."

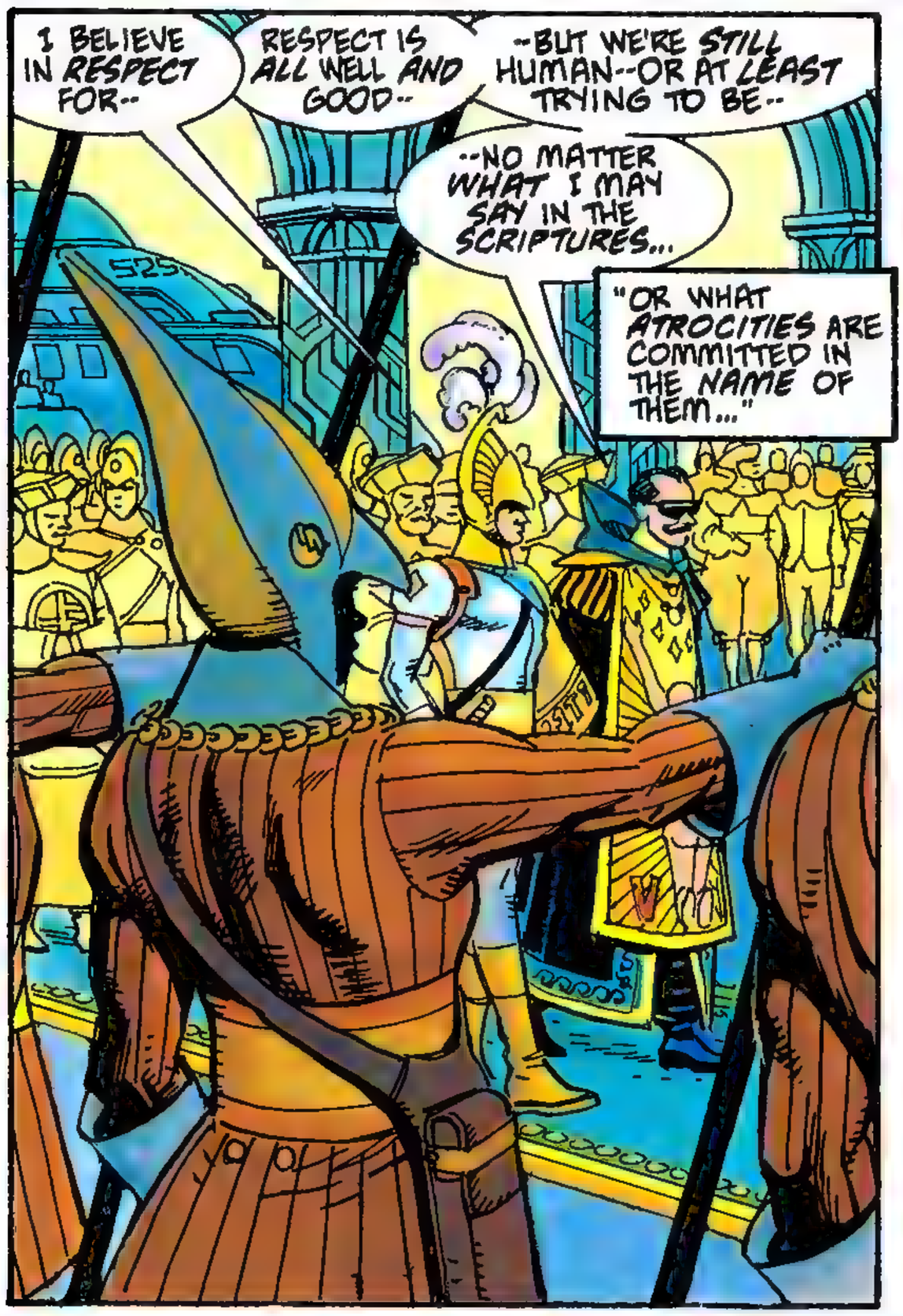

THE MORE I BEGIN TO THINK I'D LIKE TO DIE IN BED.
"ALL BY HIMSELF, I'M QUITE SURE..."
SEVEN MINUTES TO EARTHSIDE--
THANK YOU, ALLARDYCE--
--PLEASE ALERT THE HONOR GUARD TO KEEP THE POMP TO A MINIMUM...
WE ARE ALL OF US TOO TIRED FOR A DRESS CEREMONY...
YES, SIR-- ONE MORE THING--
YES...?
GROUND CONTROL TELLS ME THE FATHER IS PRESENT...
RROOOOARR
RRRRR


THANK YOU--A LITTLE ADVANCE WARNING ALWAYS DOES MY STOMACH A WORLD OF GOOD.
"I'D ALWAYS SUSPECTED THAT WOOD ENVIED MY POSITION IN THE PANTHEON--THAT HE WAS CONVINCED HE SHOULD HAVE BEEN AMONG THE TRINITY--
"--BUT, HEY--TO HELL WITH HIM--
"--WHEN HE GETS TO WRITE THE BIBLE--HE CAN DOLE OUT THE PERKS--KNOW WHAT I MEAN...?"
OOOAARRRRRRRRRRRRRR

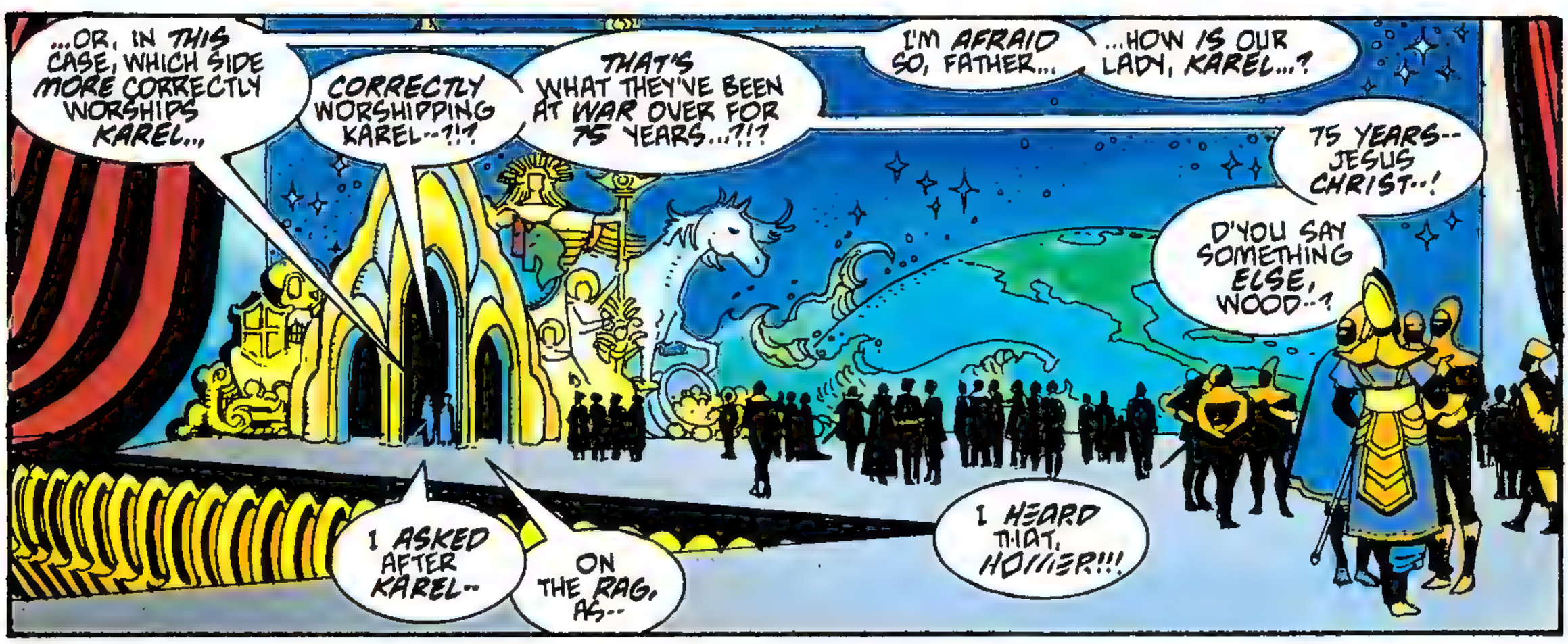

TRY AS I MAY, I HAVE NEVER HAD QUITE THE RELATIONSHIP WITH THE HIGH FATHER THAT IS EXPECTED OF ME--
"THAT'S BECAUSE YOU'RE SUCH A TOTAL STIFF--"
I KNOW HE MEANS WELL-- BUT HIS CONSTANT WITTICISMS ARE A LITTLE DISCONCERTING...
"--LIGHTEN UP, MAN-- NOW THAT WE ARE AS GODS, AND SHIT--
"--WE CAN AFFORD A FEW LAUGHS AT OUR OWN EXPENSE..."
I UNDER-STAND, SIR--HOW LONG HAS IT BEEN SINCE YOU'VE BEEN IN THE PRESENCE...?
TOO LONG, ALLARDYCE--


--FAR TOO LONG.
IT'S YOUNG WOOD-- RETURNED FROM THE HOLY WAR--
GREET HIM FOR ME, WON'T YOU, HIGH FATHER...?
RELAX, KAREL--
--THERE AIN'T NOBODY HERE BUT US CHICKENS, YET...
...WHILE WE'RE ALONE, WE CAN TALK JUST LIKE REAL PEOPLE--
RRROOOOAARRRR
RRRR
--AND SAVE THE HOODOO VOODOO FOR THE RUBES THAT APPRECIATE IT.
IF YOU'LL EXCUSE ME, I'LL BRING HIM IN--
--HE LOVES TO BE GREETED WITH A LITTLE POMP AND CIRCUMSTANCE.
"WITH KAREL INSTALLED AS GODDESS, THE MUSEUM HAD MORE THAN FLOURISHED...
"COMBINING ELEMENTS OF THE FORBIDDEN CITY, THE TAJ MAHAL AND DISNEYLAND INTO ONE BIG COSMIC HEADQUARTERS...
"...BUT EVEN AS A GODDESS, KAREL LACKED ANY REAL IMAGINATION...
"...AND THAT'S WHERE GOOD OLD RELIABLE HOMER--THAT LITTLE OLD MYTHMAKER, ME--CAME IN."

WONDERFUL TO SEE YOU AGAIN, HIGH FATHER..
"I'LL BET..."
MUST YOU BE SUCH A PRIG, WOOD..?
--WE DO GO BACK A NUMBER OF YEARS...
671


I BELIEVE IN RESPECT FOR--
RESPECT IS ALL WELL AND GOOD--
--BUT WE'RE STILL HUMAN--OR AT LEAST TRYING TO BE--
--NO MATTER WHAT I MAY SAY IN THE SCRIPTURES...
"OR WHAT ATROCITIES ARE COMMITTED IN THE NAME OF THEM..."

...AND SPEAKING OF SCRIPTURE...
...HAVE YOU AND YOURS FOUND ANY WAY TO BRING THE JIHAD IN SECTOR 612 TO ANY KIND OF REASONABLE CONCLUSION?
I'M AFRAID NOT, FATHER...
...IT'S LIKE THAT OLD STORY YOU TOLD ME-- GUINEVERE'S TRAV--
GULLIVER'S TRAVELS--
WHATEVER-- IT'S THE STORY OF WHICH END OF THE EGG TO CRACK...


...OR, IN THIS CASE, WHICH SIDE MORE CORRECTLY WORSHIPS KAREL...
CORRECTLY WORSHIPPING KAREL--?!?
THAT'S WHAT THEY'VE BEEN AT WAR OVER FOR 75 YEARS...?!?
I'M AFRAID SO, FATHER...
...HOW IS OUR LADY, KAREL...?
75 YEARS-- JESUS CHRIST..!
D'YOU SAY SOMETHING ELSE, WOOD..?
I ASKED AFTER KAREL--
ON THE RAG, AS--
I HEARD THAT, HOMER!!!

YOUR GRACE--

--I BRING NEWS OF THE HOLY WARS...

FOR CHRIST'S SAKE, WOOD--GET OFF YOUR DAMNED KNEES--

--WE'RE ALL FRIENDS HERE...

PLEASE RISE, SIR...

--AND IGNORE HIM--HE'S BEEN LIKE THIS FOR YEARS...

"LIKE I SAID--NO IMAGINATION..."

EASY, KAREL--

--IT'S JUST THAT THEY ALWAYS LOOK LIKE THEY'RE TRYING TO PEEK UP YOUR DRESS...

HOMER!?!

"WHAT ELSE WOULD YOU EXPECT FROM A GODDESS WHO CAN'T GET ENOUGH OF HER OWN ICONOGRAPHY TO SUIT HER...?

"IF I HAD A NICKEL FOR EVERY TRACT I'VE PUBLISHED, I COULD BUY A DOZEN PLANETS...

"...BUT, HEY--AS FATHER IN THE CURRENT HOLY TRINITY, I'VE GOT EVERYTHING I NEED AS IT IS..."

AS YOU WELL KNOW, GRACE, YOUR WORD SPREADS ACROSS THE LENGTH AND BREADTH--

--AND, AS SOON AS IT GETS THERE, IT STARTS NOTHING, IT SEEMS, BUT LOCAL HOLOCAUST...

TOO TRUE, YOUR GRACE--TOO TRUE.

HOW DO YOU MEAN...?

ETERNAL LIFE HAS NOT BEEN THE UNQUALIFIED BLESSING HOPED FOR...

...ON THAT LONG DAY WHEN THE HOLY GHOST GAVE UP HIS SPIRIT...

"HOLY GHOST!! EASILY THE BIGGEST MISTAKE OF MY LIFE..."

MUST YOU--EVEN IN THE PRIVACY OF--

SHUT UP, HOMER--CONTINUE, BRENT--

ALTHOUGH WE HAVE GROWN--AND SPREAD THE SEED OF YOUR HOLINESS BEYOND OUR WILDEST FIRST DREAMS OF ENDEAVOR...

...YET STILL THERE REMAINS THE CRY...TO END THE... YOU WILL PARDON ME, GRACE...

"...WAS DEIFYING THAT COMPLETE ASSHOLE, RICK PURVIS-- GAAAH--!"

...THE PLAGUE OF ETERNITY--THE PLAGUE, YOUR GRACE.

THEY REALLY CALL IT...THAT, BRENT...?

I'M AFRAID THEY DO, GRACE--AND THE WARS GROW UGLIER...

...BETWEEN THOSE WHO WANT ETERNAL LIFE-- AND THOSE WHO FEEL THAT THIS MUST END.

"BUT HEY-- WHAT COULD I DO--?"

"--HE WAS THERE--HE DIED--WHAT THE HELL--?"

THERE IS EVEN TALK IN SOME QUARTERS...I FIND THIS VERY DIFFICULT, YOUR--

IF YOU CANNOT SPEAK, I CAN BECOME ONE WITH--

NO-- PLEASE-- I CAN--

"DAMNED RIGHT, NO--"

--THERE IS TALK OF FINDING SOME WAY TO KILL YOU...

"SHE MIGHT FIND OUT YOU'VE BEEN CARRYING A THOUSAND YEAR TORCH FOR HER...

"AS IF SHE HADN'T KNOWN FOR THE LAST 999..."

COME HERE, HOMER...

...I WANT YOU TO HEAR THIS...

NOT TO WORRY, KAREL--I'VE BEEN EAVESDROPPING ALL ALONG--

--I WOULDN'T LOSE ANY SLEEP-- HASN'T BEEN A DEITY IN HISTORY THAT AT LEAST SOMEBODY WANTED DEAD--GOES WITH THE TERRITORY...

...AS A MATTER OF FACT, WOULDN'T SURPRISE ME TO DISCOVER YOUR BIGGEST ACOLYTES WOULD LOVE TO SEE YOU DIE--AGAIN--JUST TO HAVE A NEW MARTYR.

WHAT?!?

YEAH-- IT'S BEEN SO LONG SINCE THE LAST TIME-- I--

I BELIEVE THERE IS MORE TO FEAR FROM OUTSIDE, GRACE--FROM ONE IN PARTICULAR...

"FEAR... FROM THE OUTSIDE, HUH...?

"...WELL, WE ALL KNEW WHO WOOD WAS TALKING ABOUT--EVEN IF HE COULDN'T BRING HIMSELF TO SAY THE NAME..."

YAAAAARRRRGHHHHHHHHH!!!

EASY--

VVRRRR ROOOOOOOOMMMM

YAAAAAAAAAAARRRRRRRGHHH

I SAID, EASY--

I'D LIKE HIM TO LIVE, AT LEAST A LITTLE WHILE LONGER...

"AND WHAT A NAME--THE SCOURGE OF A HUNDRED PLANETS--THE BOGEYMAN OF A HUNDRED MORE...

"...A MAN WHO HAD WIPED AWAY ALL MEMORY OF ALL THE OTHER MURDEROUS PSYCHOPATHS OF MANKIND'S ILLUSTRIOUS HISTORY..."

YOU CAN'T KILL ME--NOT--

HOW MANY TIMES I GOTTA TELL YOU, FAGGOT--

--YOU ARE NOT TO BLEED--

--IN THE PRESENCE OF LORD TOMORROW...?

"...TOMMY TOMORROW... AND FOR BETTER OR WORSE..."

DON'T BE SO HARD ON THE KNIGHT, DEUTSCH...

--WITHOUT HIS PRECIOUS GRACE KAREL, WE WOULDN'T ALL BE IMMORTAL, RIGHT--?

YAAAARRRGHHHHHHH!!!

"...I INVENTED HIM."

TELL ME SOMETHING, SIR KNIGHT--

--AND REALLY--IT'S ALL JUST BETWEEN US AND THESE FOUR WALLS...

"MAYBE HITLER WAS A MONSTER IN HIS TIME...

"...ATTILA...OR NERO...OR STALIN...MAYBE THEY WERE ALL CLASS-A HORRORS..."

DID YOU EVER SCREW HER...?

YOU SICKEN M--

YAARRGHH!

BHP-BHP-BHP

DEUTSCH--PLEASE RELAX--

"...BUT BY SHEER WEIGHT OF NUMBERS...

"...BY UTTER, GROSS IMMORALITY..."

I HAVEN'T LIVED THIS LONG...

...OR THIS RECKLESSLY...

...TO BE DENIED THE SIMPLE PLEASURE OF ACTING ON A WHIM...

...SO STAND BACK, PLANETEERS...

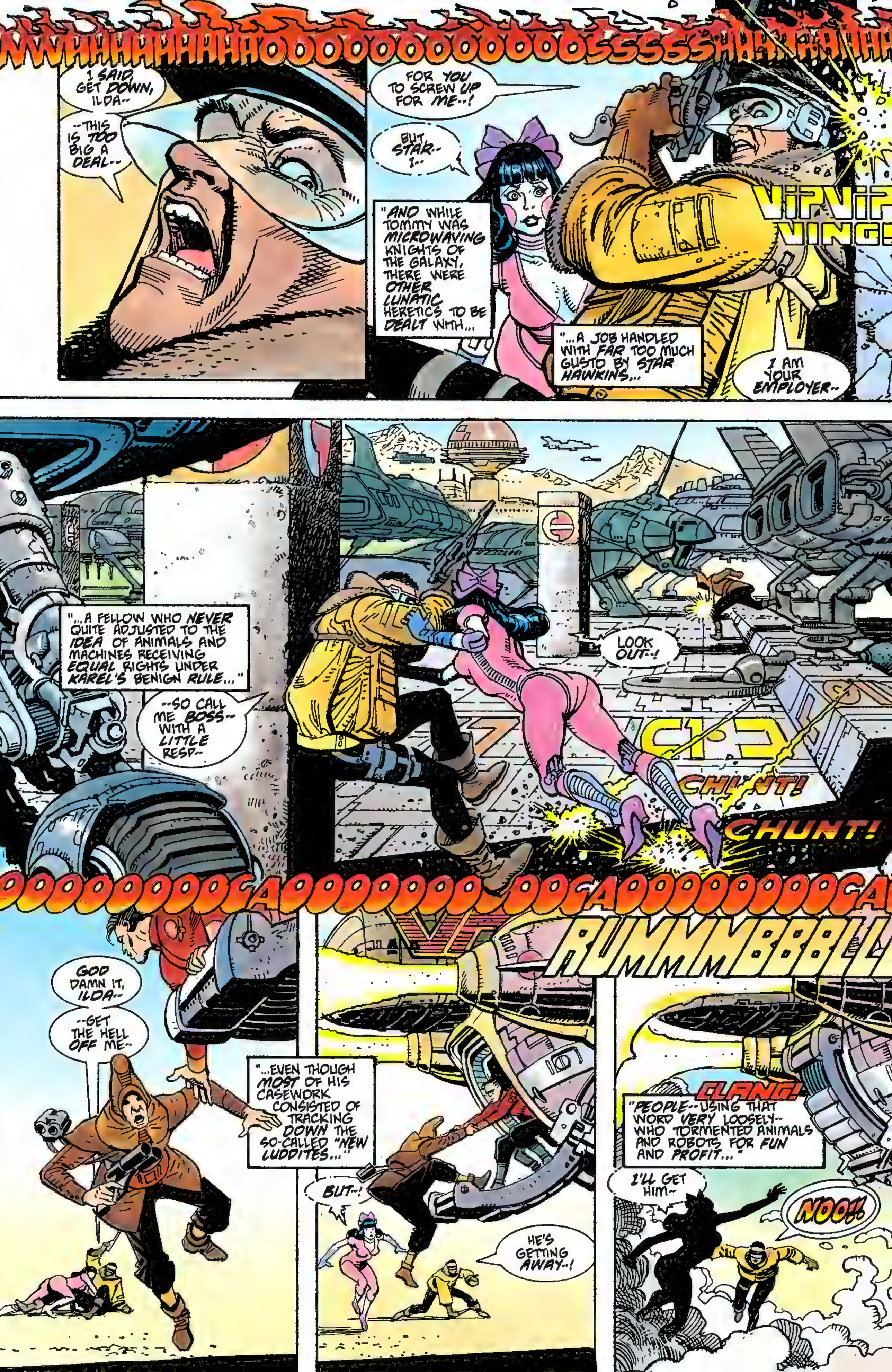
...THIS IS SOMETHING I'VE WANTED TO TRY FOR YEARS.

Click!

I WANT TO SEE IF YOU CAN COOK THESE SELF-RIGHTEOUS VIRGINS IN THEIR SHELLS.

WHHHOOOOOOSSHHHH!!

"...NONE OF THEM COULD HOLD A CANDLE TO THAT MONSTER--PERIOD."


I SAID GET DOWN, ILDA--
--THIS IS TOO BIG A DEAL--
FOR YOU TO SCREW UP FOR ME--!
BUT STAR-- I--
"AND WHILE TOMMY WAS MICROWAVING KNIGHTS OF THE GALAXY, THERE WERE OTHER LUNATIC HERETICS TO BE DEALT WITH...
"...A JOB HANDLED WITH FAR TOO MUCH GUSTO BY STAR HAWKINS...
I AM YOUR EMPLOYER--
"...A FELLOW WHO NEVER QUITE ADJUSTED TO THE IDEA OF ANIMALS AND MACHINES RECEIVING EQUAL RIGHTS UNDER KAREL'S BENIGN RULE..."
--SO CALL ME BOSS-- WITH A LITTLE RESP--
LOOK OUT--!
CHUNT!
CHUNT!
GOD DAMN IT, ILDA--
--GET THE HELL OFF ME--
"...EVEN THOUGH MOST OF HIS CASEWORK CONSISTED OF TRACKING DOWN THE SO-CALLED "NEW LUDDITES..."
BUT--!
HE'S GETTING AWAY--!
RUMMMBBBLL
CLANG!
"PEOPLE--USING THAT WORD VERY LOOSELY-- WHO TORMENTED ANIMALS AND ROBOTS FOR FUN AND PROFIT..."
I'LL GET HIM--
NOOH

ROOOOOARRR!!!

"PRIMARILY FOR THE HOLOGRAM TRADE...

"...THERE ARE TIMES I DON'T ENTIRELY REGRET MY BLINDNESS...

GOD DAMN IT...

I SHOULD HAVE JUNKED YOU YEARS AGO--!

BUT ST-- BOSS-- MR. HAWKINS--

--I WAS ONLY TRYING TO HELP--

HELP WHAT-- TO SCREW THINGS UP AGAIN--?!?

HAVE YOU ANY IDEA WHO THAT SCUM WAS--THE SLIGHTEST IDEA--?

HE'S THE MAN RESPONSIBLE FOR ALL THOSE MELTDOWNS OF YOUR FELLOW CLANKERS...

"ALWAYS SO SENSITVE TO THE FEELINGS OF OTHERS..."

"STAR (NEE AXEL STARKER) HAWKINS-- SMUG AND POMPOUS..

"--EVEN WHILE PEEKING INTO STRANGERS' BEDROOM WINDOWS..."

ILDA...

POLASER X-5 40070

"WHILE POOR JON STARKER--AS TOUGH AND ROUGH AS HE MADE HIMSELF OUT TO BE...

"...WAS THE SADDEST AND LONELIEST MAN I'VE EVER KNOWN."

WHY, ILDA--HOW COULD YOU DO THIS TO ME...?

HEY, MAN--YOU WANT SOMETHING, YOU ASK FOR IT-- YOU DIG--?

HUH...?

AND MY NAME AIN'T HILDA-- GET IT--?

LIVE

The TROP-CONO

TOUCHIE FEELIE

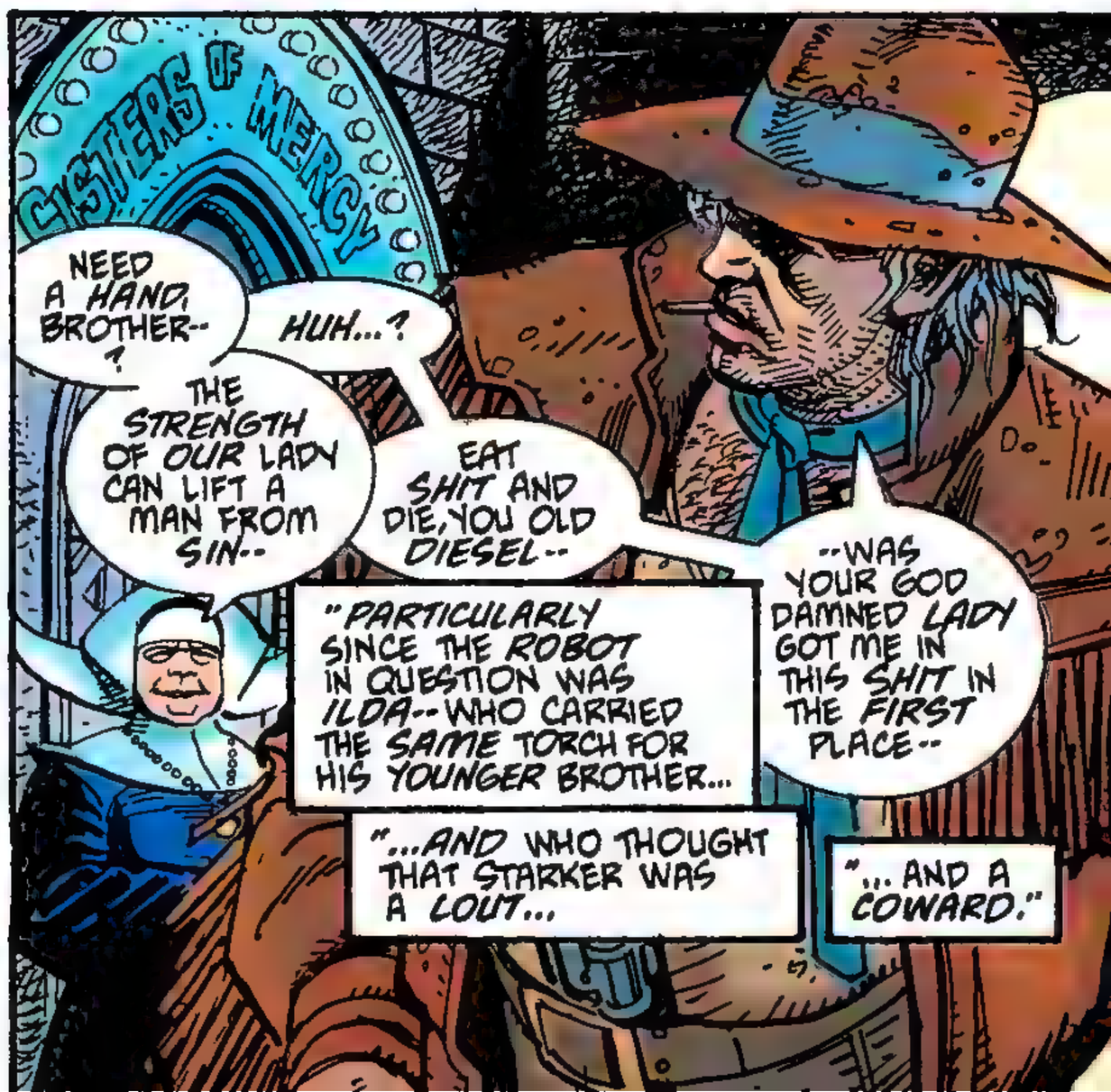
SO HARD YOU'LL THINK IT'S REAL

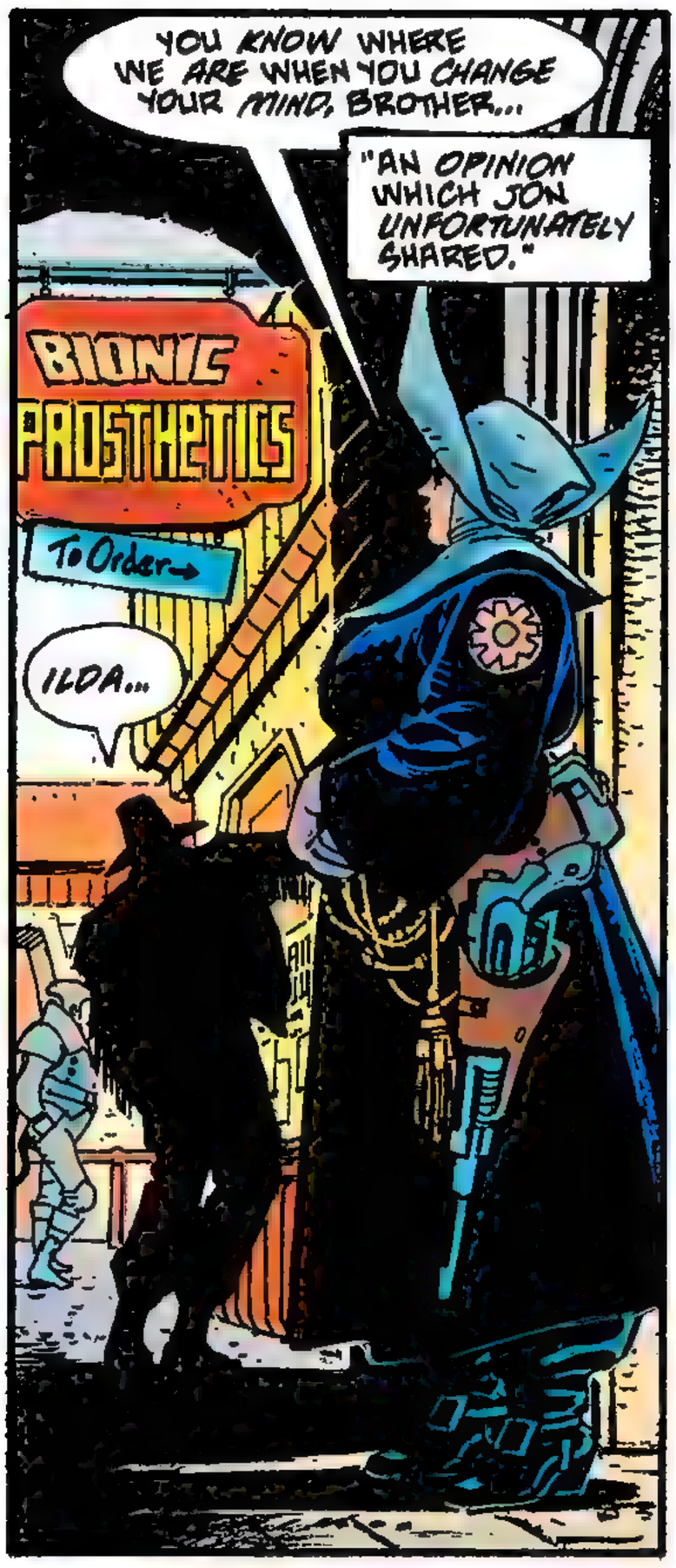
COILS OF LOVE

COVER

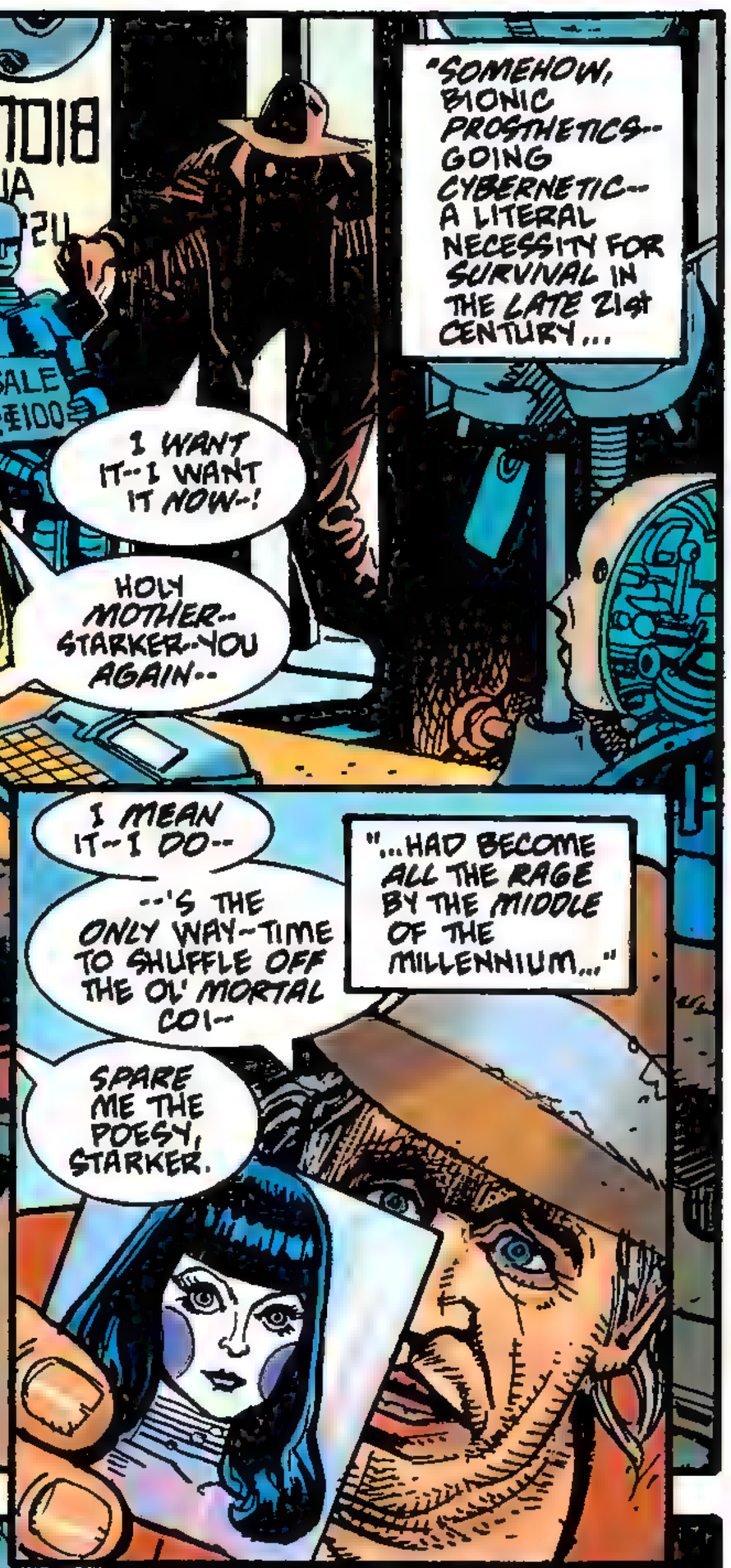
"THE MILLENNIUM HAD BEEN LESS THAN KIND TO POOR JON...

"...HE'D ALWAYS HAD A DRINKING PROBLEM... NOW HE HAD A THOUSAND-YEAR THIRST..."




YOU KNOW WHERE WE ARE WHEN YOU CHANGE YOUR MIND, BROTHER...
"AN OPINION WHICH JON UNFORTUNATELY SHARED."
BIONIC PROSTHETICS
To Order→
ILDA...

SALE
I WANT IT--I WANT IT NOW--!
HOLY MOTHER--STARKER--YOU AGAIN--
HOW MANY TIMES DO I HAVE TO THROW YOU OUT OF HERE?
PAT. VENUS 1187


"SOMEHOW, BIONIC PROSTHETICS--GOING CYBERNETIC--A LITERAL NECESSITY FOR SURVIVAL IN THE LATE 21st CENTURY...
I MEAN IT--I DO--
--'S THE ONLY WAY--TIME TO SHUFFLE OFF THE OL' MORTAL COI--
"...HAD BECOME ALL THE RAGE BY THE MIDDLE OF THE MILLENNIUM..."
SPARE ME THE POESY, STARKER.

YOU COME IN TWICE A WEEK--BLIND DRUNK--
BUT--
--BUT YOU DON'T HAVE ANY REAL DESIRE TO GO CYBERNETIC--IT'S JUST THE CHEAP LIQUOR TALKING--
--ISN'T THAT RIGHT...?
"...AND ULTIMATELY PASSED INTO THE HUMAN REPERTOIRE--LIKE TATTOOS, AND TELEVISION..."
THA'S RI--OH GOD--FORGIVE ME--
'S JUS' I LOVE HER SO...
...BUT SHE WON'T EVEN LOOK AT ME...
THAT'S RIGHT--JUST LET IT GO--
"...YOU KNOW--NOT EVERYBODY HAD ONE--BUT EVERYONE KNEW SOMEONE WHO DID."

BIONIC PROSTHETICS
I THOUGHT MAYBE IF I BECAME MORE--YOU KNOW--
--WOMEN--THEY'RE ALL ALIKE--EVEN THE ATOMIC ONES...
...LISTEN--WE BOTH KNOW YOU DON'T REALLY WANT TO DO THIS...
...BUT, IF YOU'RE INTERESTED, I'VE GOT SOME FRIENDS WHO COULD USE A MAN WITH YOUR SKILLS...
...WHAT DO YOU SAY?

"UNFORTUNATELY, ALONG WITH THIS UNIVERSAL SELF-MUTILATION CAME OTHER CHANGES...

"...NOT THE LEAST OF WHICH WAS THE ATTITUDE SO TIMIDLY DESCRIBED BY THE STIFF, WOOD, TO KAREL AS THE 'PLAGUE OF ETERNITY'...

"...I, OF ALL PEOPLE, UNDERSTOOD THIS ALL TOO WELL...

"...YOU LIVE FOREVER, EVEN I GET TIRED OF MY OWN BULLSHIT."

THE SIGNAL, SIR--IT'S ALMOST IDENTICAL TO--

YES-- I KNOW IT ALL TOO WELL-- IT'S A DIALECT OF THE METHUSELOIDS--

--JUST DIFFERENT ENOUGH TO BE UNINTELLIGIBLE.

"ON THE BASIS OF THESE RUMORS OF AN ANTI-ETERNAL LIFE BACKLASH, I CONVINCED KAREL TO DISPATCH WOOD TO THE EDGE..."

WHAT DOES THE TRANS-COMMUNICATION SYSTEM HAVE FOR US...?

"...TO FIND THE SOURCE OF THE BACKLASH."

THAT'S THE CONFUSION, SIR-- NOTHING.

WHAT DO YOU MEAN-- NOTHING--?

I MEAN, SIR, THAT THE MESSAGE, ACCORDING TO THE SYSTEM, HAS NO COHERENT MEANING...

FROM WHAT I HAVE LEARNED FROM HER GRACE, THAT IS A FACET OF THE METHUSELOID CULTURE EVEN SHE HAS NEVER FULLY UNDERSTOOD...

THAT LACK OF COHERENT MEANING IS COHERENT MEANING UNTO ITSELF...

...SEND A GREETING-- IN METHUSELOID--

--AND IN OUR LADY'S GRACIOUS NAME--

WE COME IN PEACE AND BEAR GREETINGS AND GOOD WILL IN THE NAME OF OUR LADY KAREL--GOODEN OF THE ETERNAL MILLENNIUM...

LORD, WOOD-- COME QUICKLY--

WHAT IS IT, ALLARDYCE--?

"AFTER ALL THESE YEARS-- ALL THAT ACCELERATED TECHNOLOGY..."

THE ALIEN SHIP--ITS SURFACE--

--IT SEEMS TO BE RIPPLING--

"...WE STILL HAD THE CAPACITY FOR SURPRISE..."

RIPPLING...?

THAT'S RIGHT, SIR--LIKE A MAN-O'-WAR--

"...IF NOT AT OUR OWN TOO FAMILIAR SELVES..."

THEY'VE EJECTED SOMETHING-- AND WHATEVER IT IS--

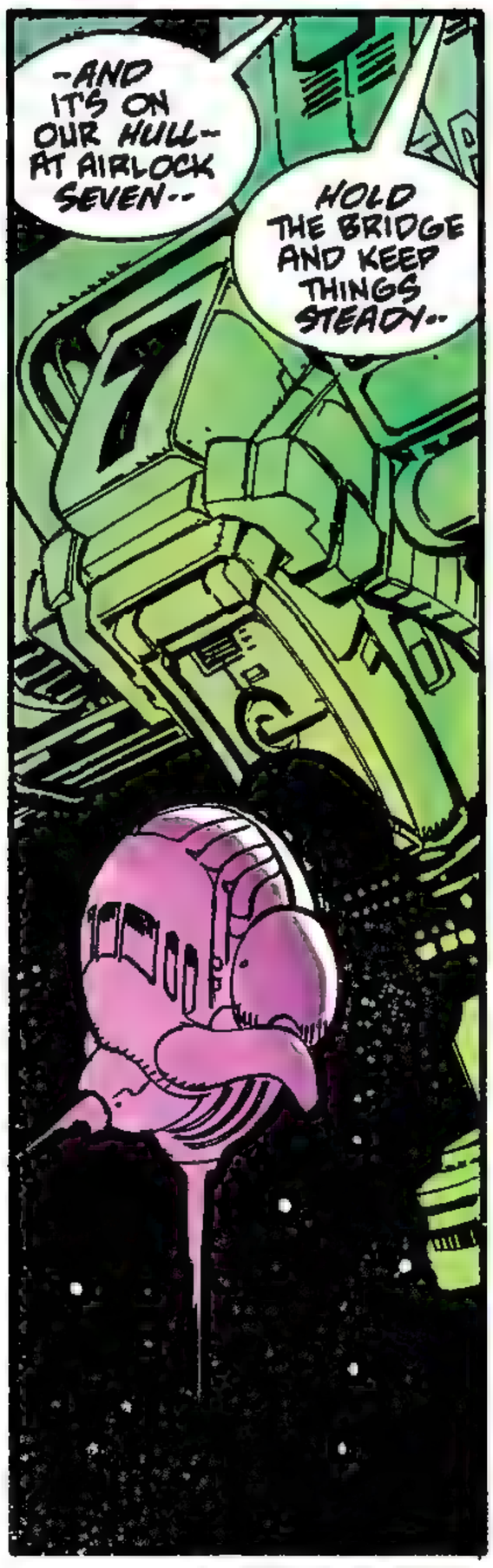
--IT'S MOVING AT HIGH SPEED--

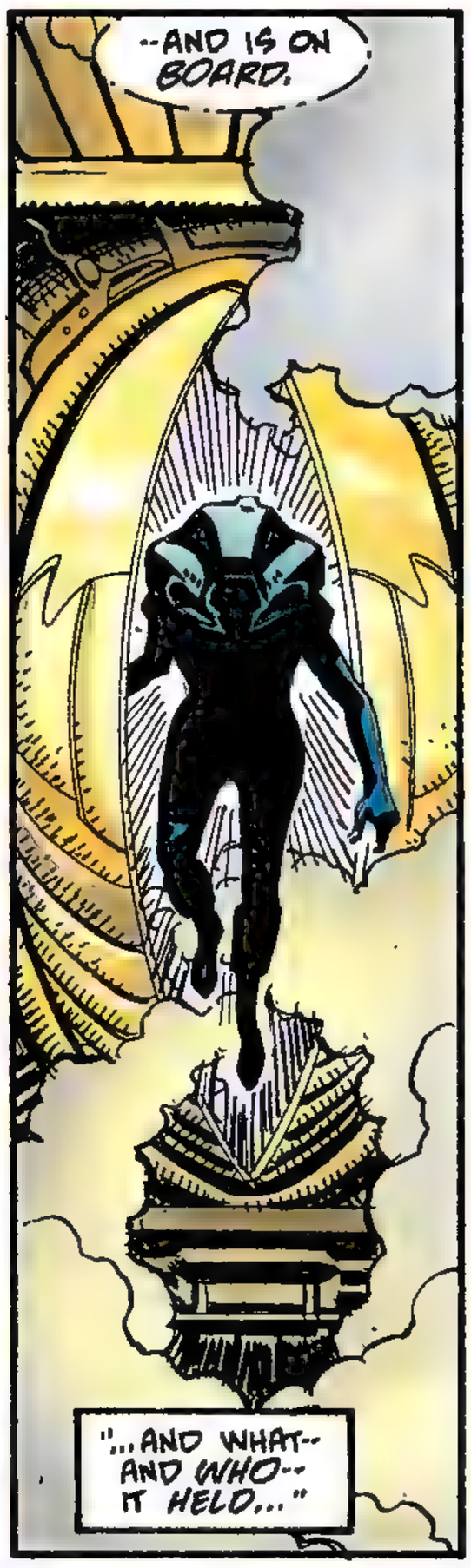
SHIELDS UP--PREPARE FOR EVASIVE ACTION--ALLARDYCE--

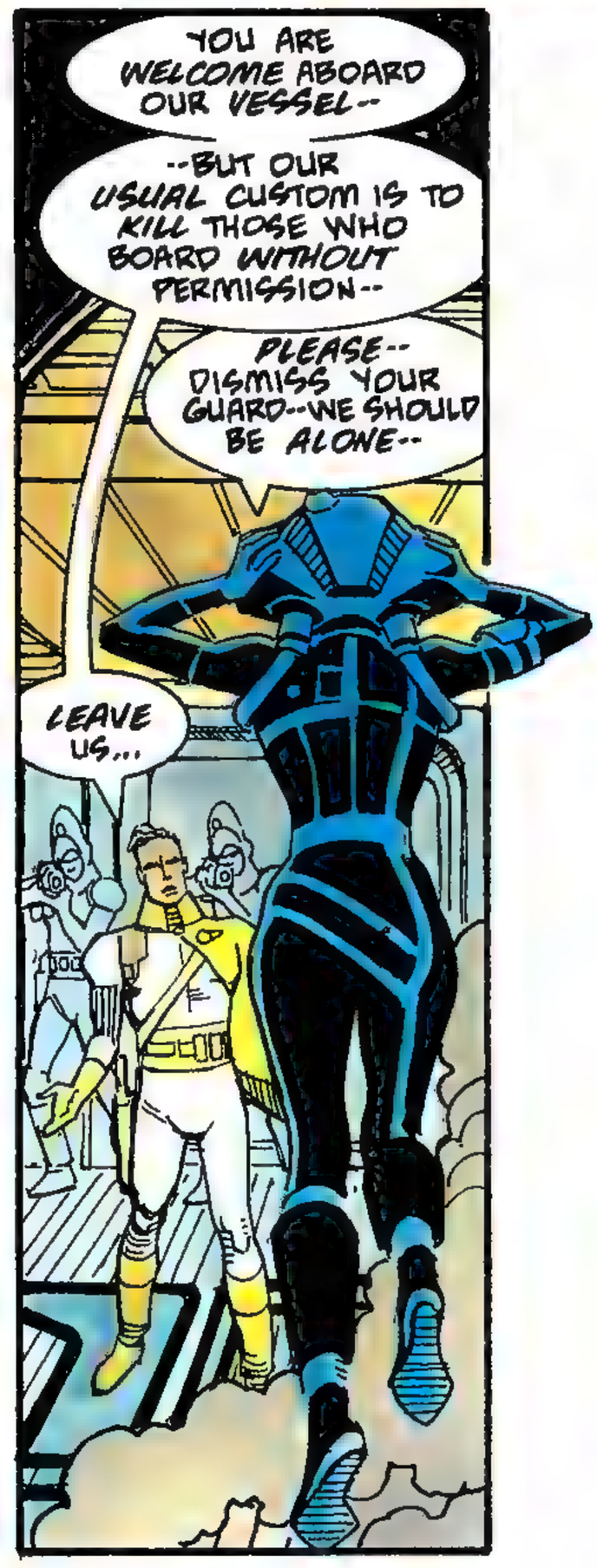
"...THEN AT THE FREQUENT SENSE OF WONDER PROVIDED BY THE GREAT OUT THERE."

SIR--SENSOR INDICATES IT'S AN UNARMED PROBE.

CARRYING ORGANIC--POSSIBLY HUMANOID--PAYLOAD--







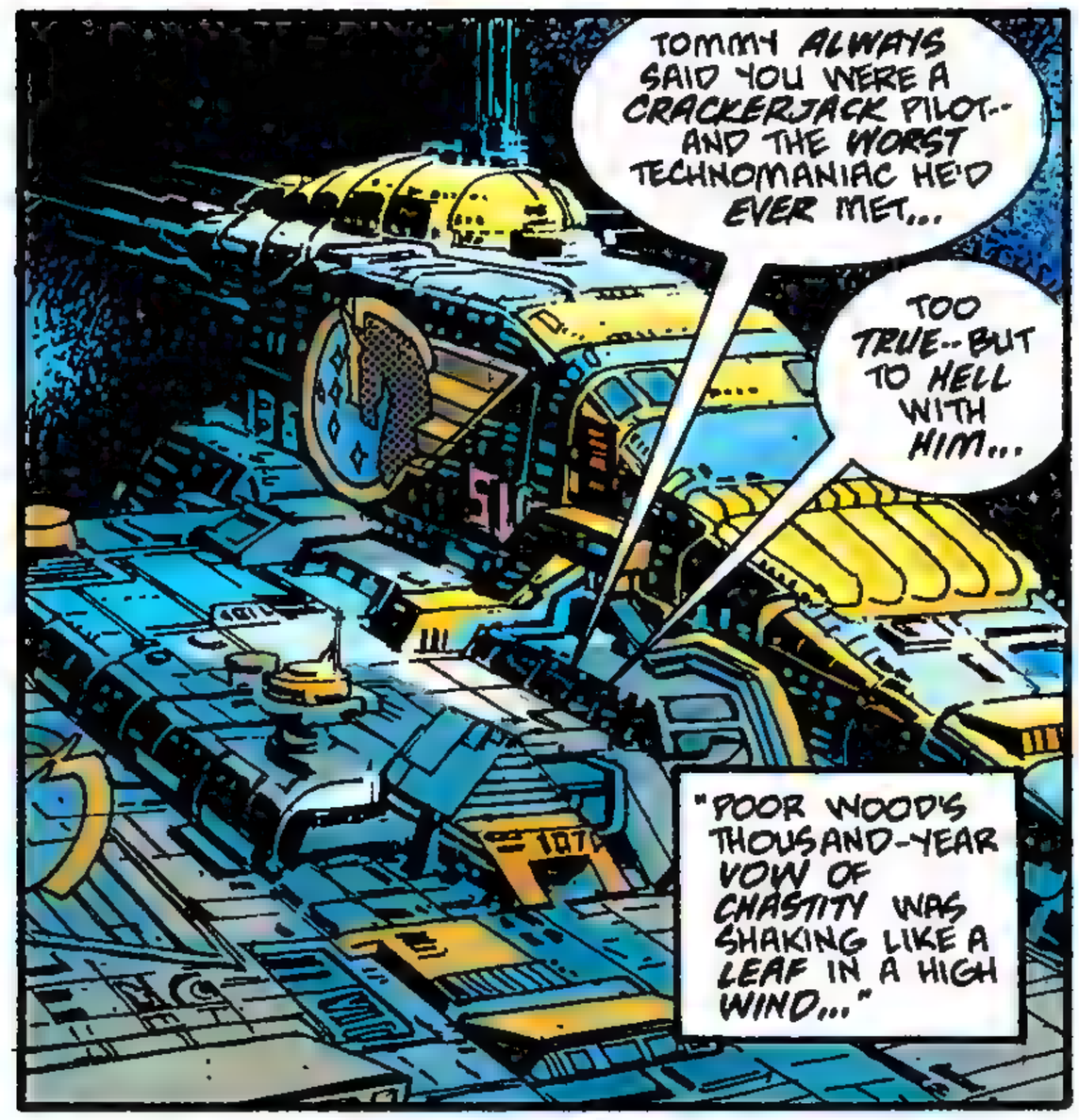
"... AS WELL AS THE PEOPLE WE ENCOUNTER IN IT."
MY NAME IS BRENDA TOMORROW-- I BELIEVE WE--
YES--WE HAVE MET-- MANY YEARS AGO--
"AH, YES--SUCH A MASTER OF UNDERSTATEMENT--"MANY YEARS AGO"."
"--A THOUSAND YEARS AGO, TO BE MORE PRECISE..."
I WAS YOUR EX-HUSBAND'S ATTACHÉ, BEFORE...

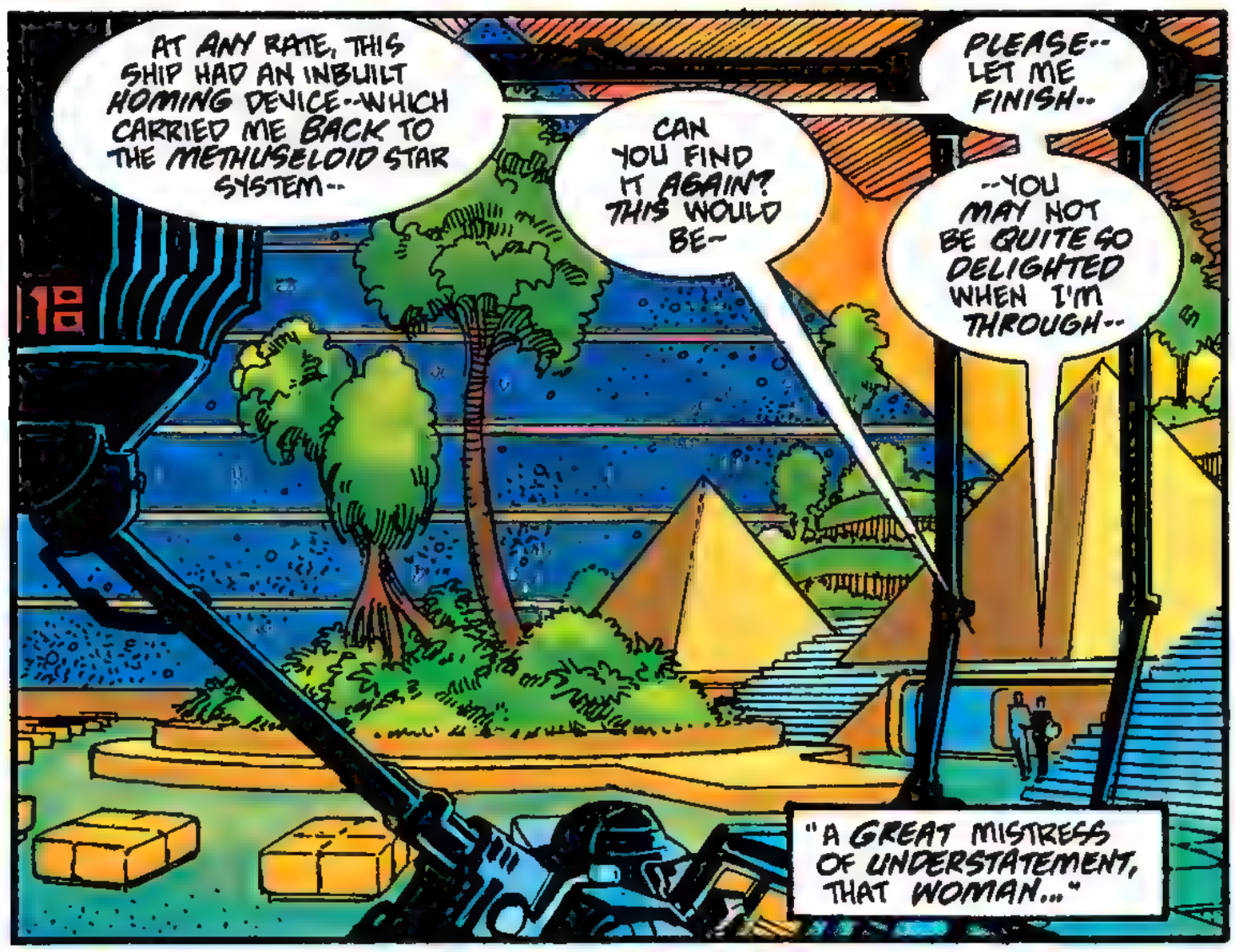
YES--OF COURSE-- THE LAST TIME I SAW THAT DEGENERATE WALKING NIGHTMARE--
--JUST BEFORE THE REST OF HUMANITY JOINED ME IN THIS ETERNAL LIFE OF DRUDGERY...
"I ALWAYS LIKED BRENDA..."
IT'S SO GOOD TO SEE SOMEONE AS OLD AS I-- SOMEONE BORN BEFORE THE PLAGUE--
--ARE YOU ALWAYS SO SHORT OF BREATH...?

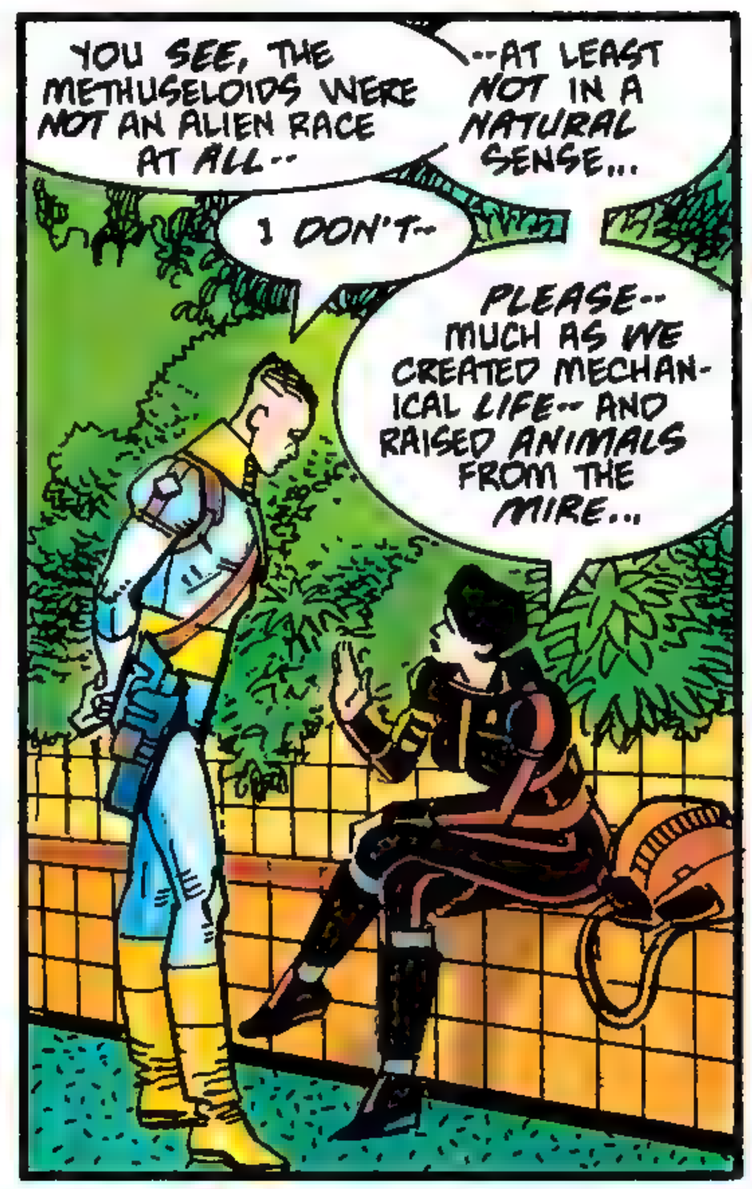
WHY, NO--I--uh--DON'T KNOW WHAT'S WRONG...
...PERHAPS THE COOLING UNIT IS DOWN...
"...ALWAYS HAD A GREAT HEAD ON HER SHOULDERS-- EVEN IF SHE DID FALL FOR THAT BASTARD TOMORROW'S LINE OF BULLSHIT..."
I'LL LOOK INTO IT...
...WHY DO YOU TRAVEL IN ALIEN COMPANY...?

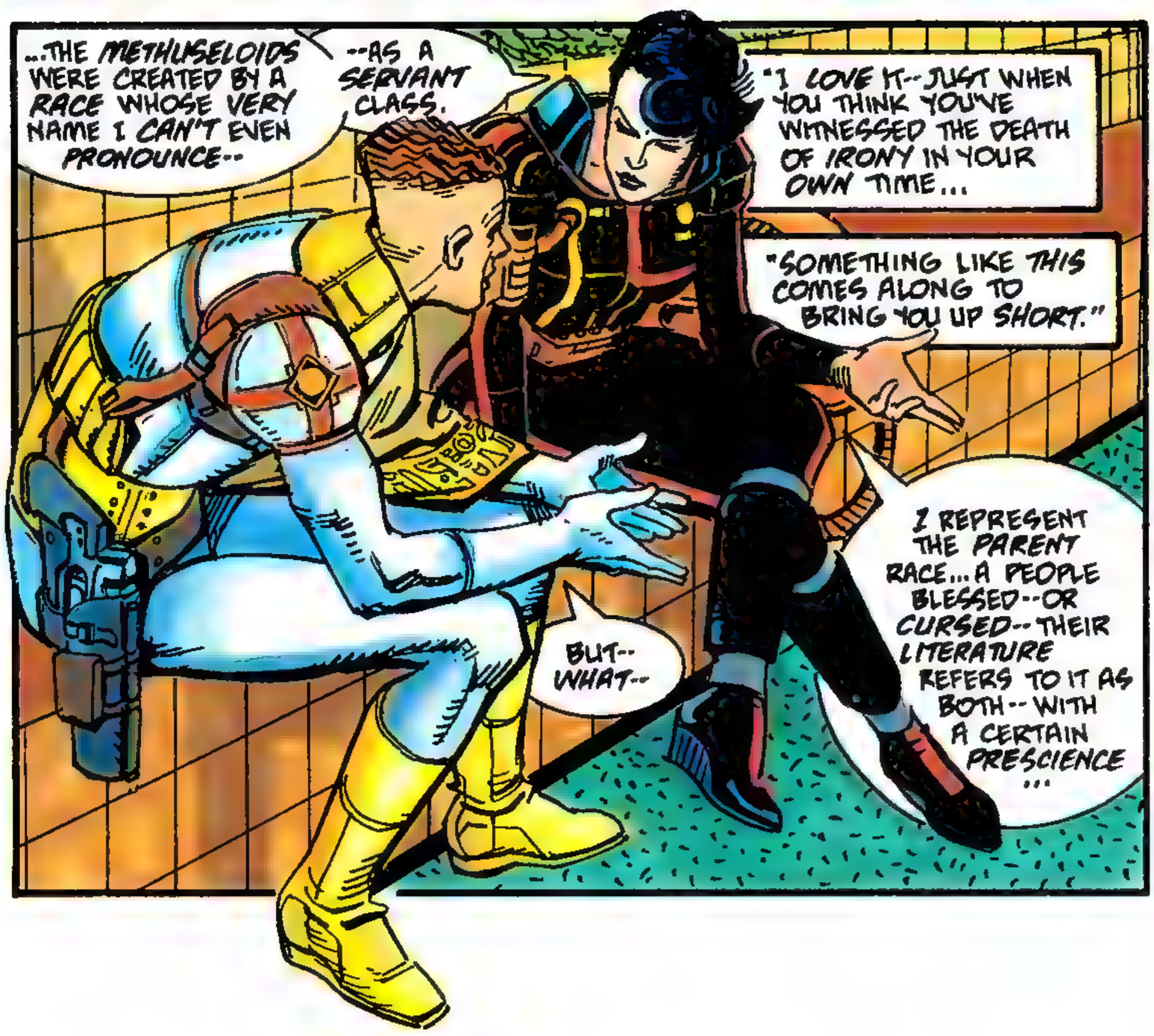
"...BUT FROM THE WAY OL' WOOD WAS LOOKING AT HER--BREAKING OUT IN A NERVOUS SWEAT EVERY TIME SHE TALKED--OR MOVED..."
AFTER ALL MY YEARS OUT HERE BEFORE THE PLAGUE...
...IT'S HUMANITY THAT SEEMS THE ALIEN RACE...
"...IT WAS PRETTY CLEAR I COULDN'T COMPETE WITH HIM IN THE LIKE DEPARTMENT."

AFTER A HUNDRED AND FIFTY YEARS, I FINALLY FIGURED OUT THE COMPLETE RANGE OF MY STOLEN SHIP...
...YOU REMEMBER-- I NEVER DID GET THE HYPER-DRIVE WORKING UNTIL I'D HAD THAT MUCH TIME TO PRACTICE--

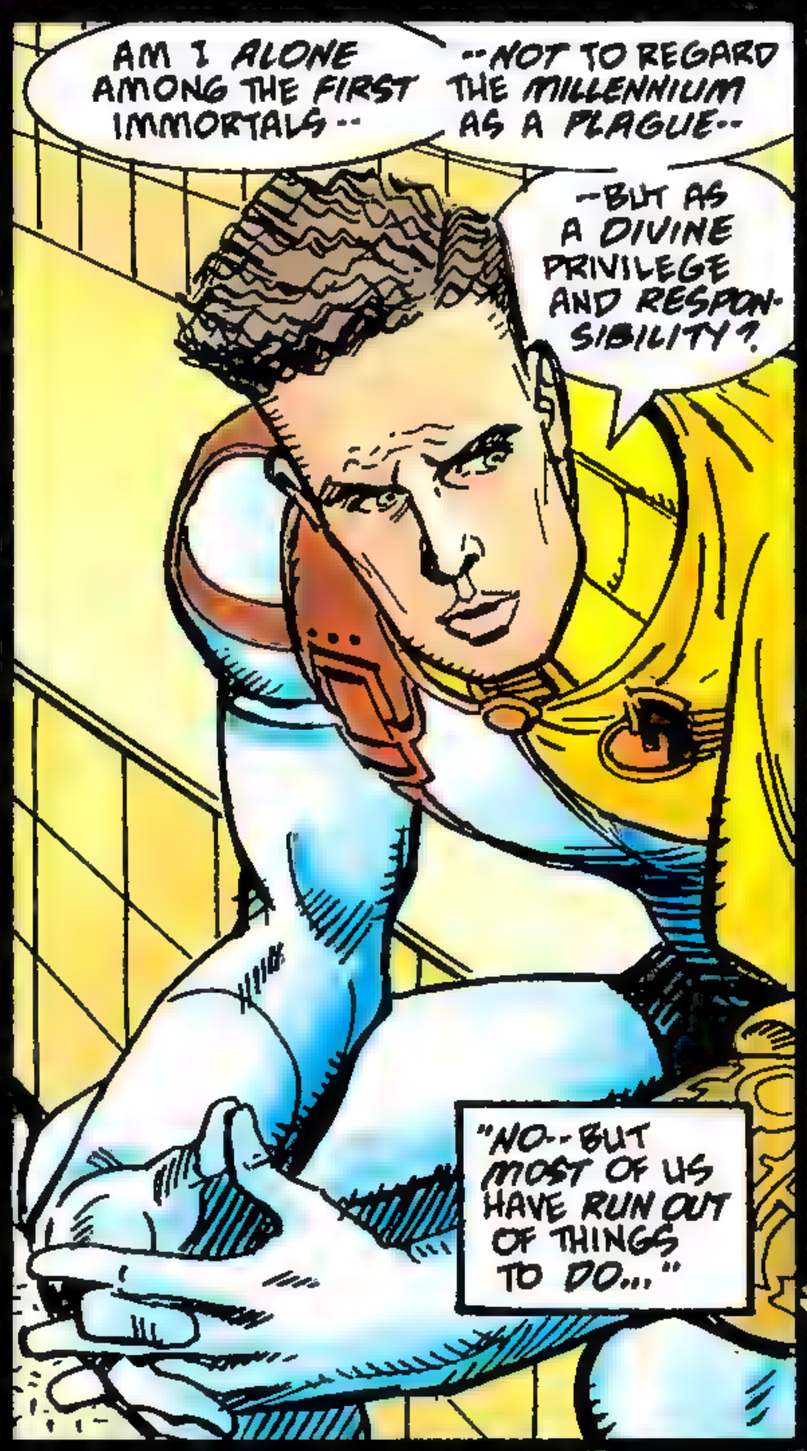

TOMMY ALWAYS SAID YOU WERE A CRACKERJACK PILOT-- AND THE WORST TECHNOMANIAC HE'D EVER MET...
TOO TRUE--BUT TO HELL WITH HIM...
"POOR WOOD'S THOUSAND-YEAR VOW OF CHASTITY WAS SHAKING LIKE A LEAF IN A HIGH WIND..."

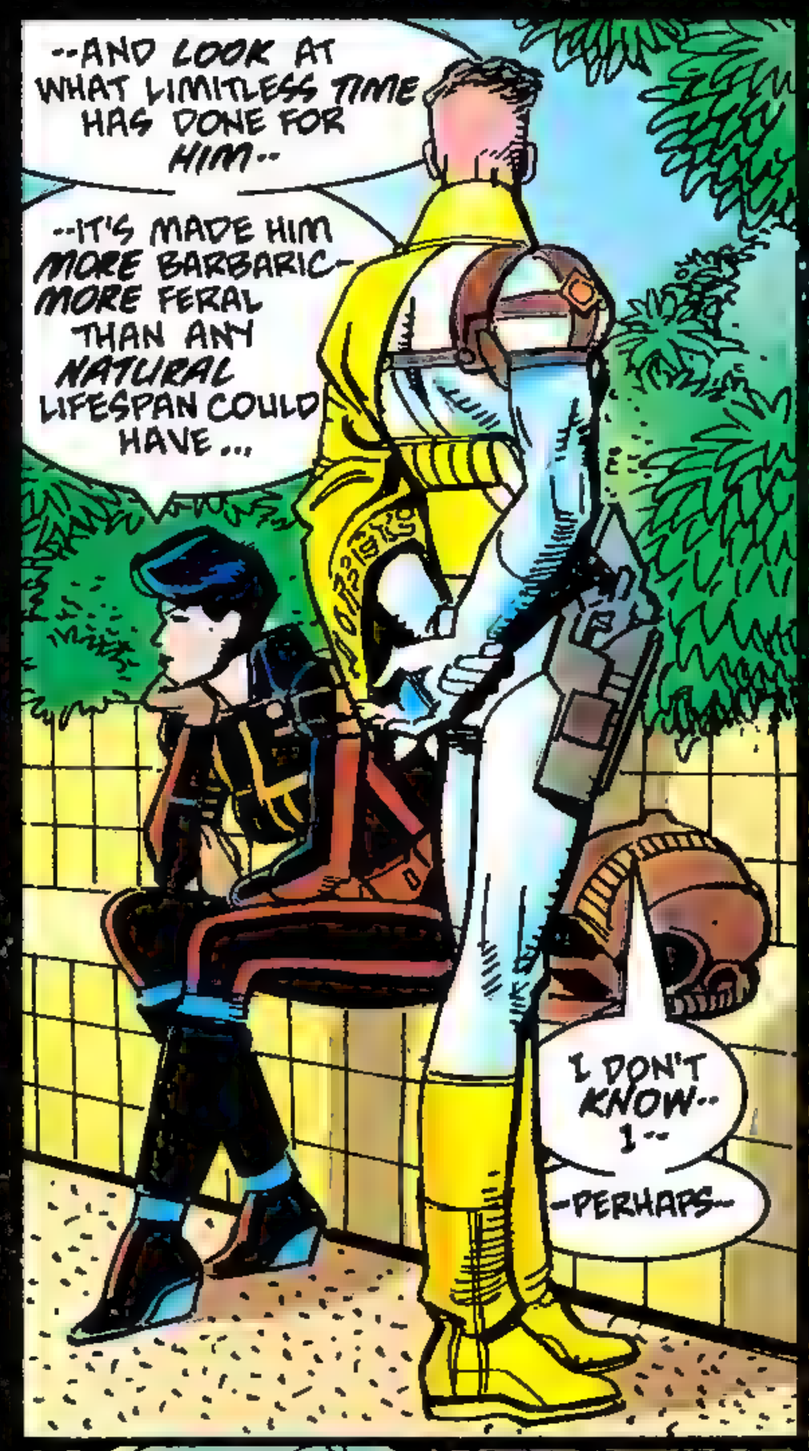

AT ANY RATE, THIS SHIP HAD AN INBUILT HOMING DEVICE--WHICH CARRIED ME BACK TO THE METHUSELOID STAR SYSTEM--
CAN YOU FIND IT AGAIN? THIS WOULD BE--
PLEASE-- LET ME FINISH--
--YOU MAY NOT BE QUITE SO DELIGHTED WHEN I'M THROUGH--
"A GREAT MISTRESS OF UNDERSTATEMENT, THAT WOMAN..."


YOU SEE, THE METHUSELOIDS WERE NOT AN ALIEN RACE AT ALL--
--AT LEAST NOT IN A NATURAL SENSE...
I DON'T--
PLEASE-- MUCH AS WE CREATED MECHANICAL LIFE-- AND RAISED ANIMALS FROM THE MIRE...


...THE METHUSELOIDS WERE CREATED BY A RACE WHOSE VERY NAME I CAN'T EVEN PRONOUNCE--
--AS A SERVANT CLASS.
"I LOVE IT--JUST WHEN YOU THINK YOU'VE WITNESSED THE DEATH OF IRONY IN YOUR OWN TIME...
"SOMETHING LIKE THIS COMES ALONG TO BRING YOU UP SHORT."
BUT-- WHAT--
I REPRESENT THE PARENT RACE...A PEOPLE BLESSED--OR CURSED--THEIR LITERATURE REFERS TO IT AS BOTH--WITH A CERTAIN PRESCIENCE ...

IT MAY TAKE ANOTHER MILLENNIUM--IT MAY BE SOONER-- BUT MARK MY WORDS--
--JUST AS I HAVE GROWN MORE THAN SICK OF THIS ETERNAL LIFE...
...EVERY MAN WILL, TOO-- SOONER OR LATER...
...IT IS LONG PAST TIME TO END THE PLAGUE OF ETERNITY.





--PERHAPS YOU SHOULD VISIT THE MUSEUM--MEET WITH OUR LADY--

I DON'T--

PRECISELY WHY I'M HERE--

--I'VE BROUGHT ALL MY WORLDLY GOODS WITH ME--

"WHY IS IT--IT'S ALWAYS THE MOST FERVENT OF THE SPIRITUALISTS...

"...WHO CAN'T SEE THE SLIGHTEST SIGNIFICANCE IN THE SCRIPTURE..."

I INTEND TO PETITION YOUR GODDESS--

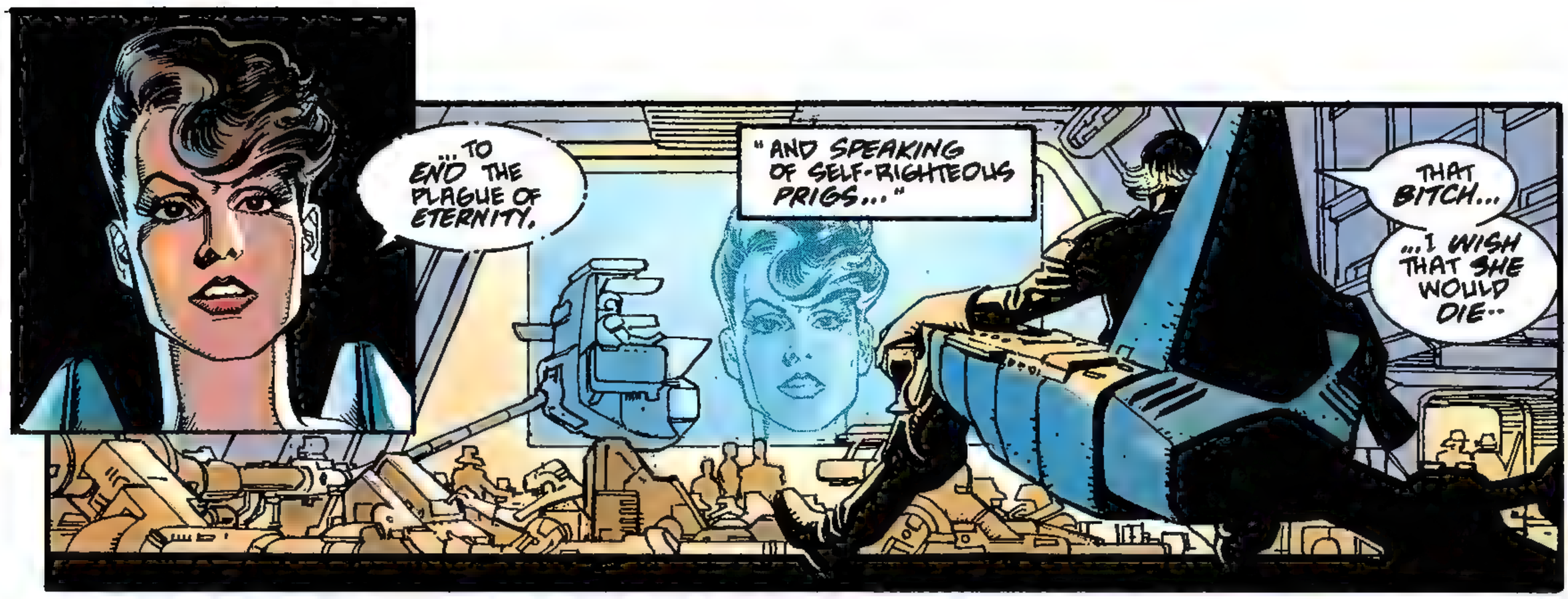
--TO JOIN ME IN A DIPLOMATIC VISIT TO MY SUPERIORS...

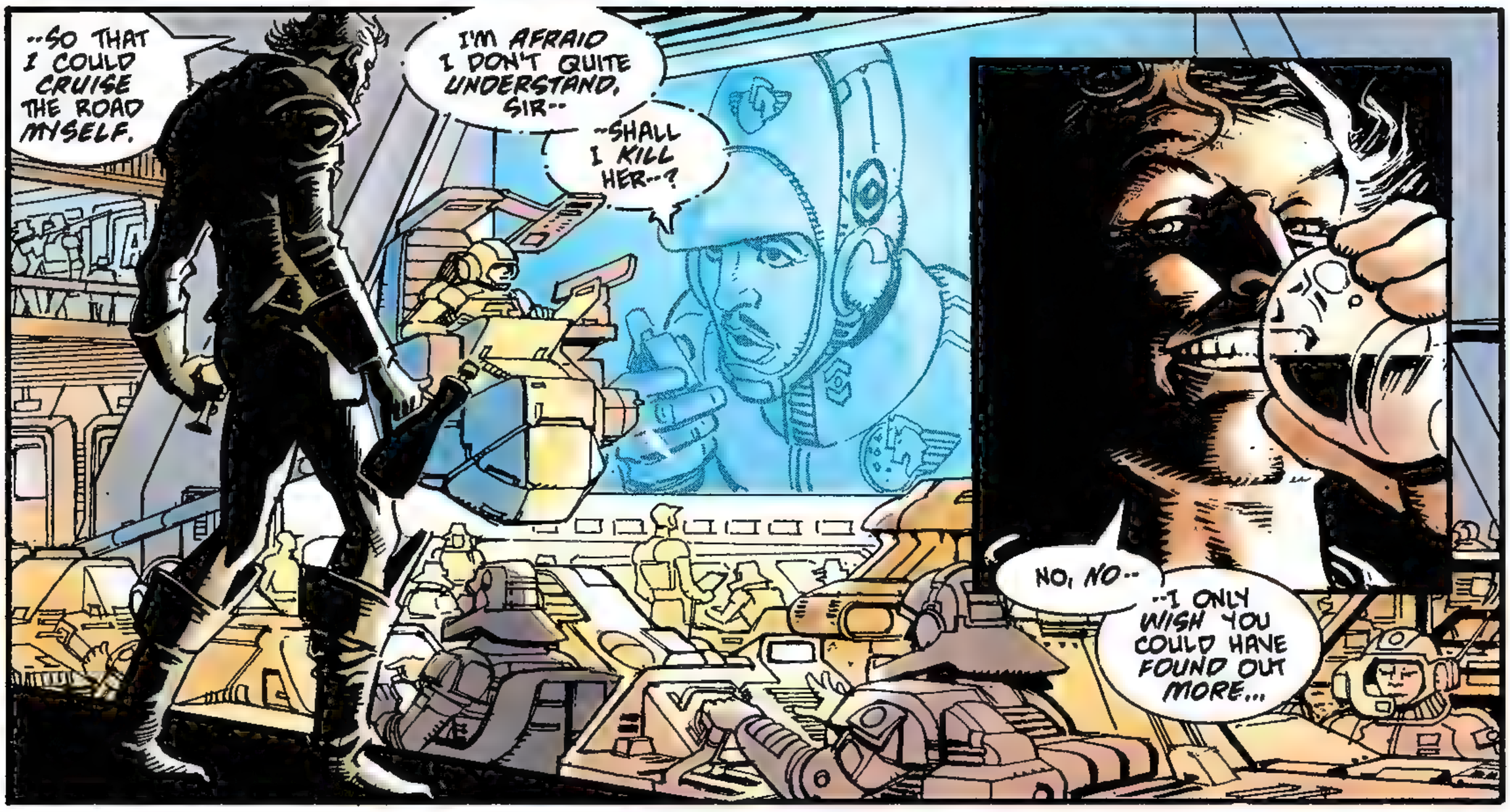
"...WHO CAN'T READ THE WRITING ON THE WALL...?"

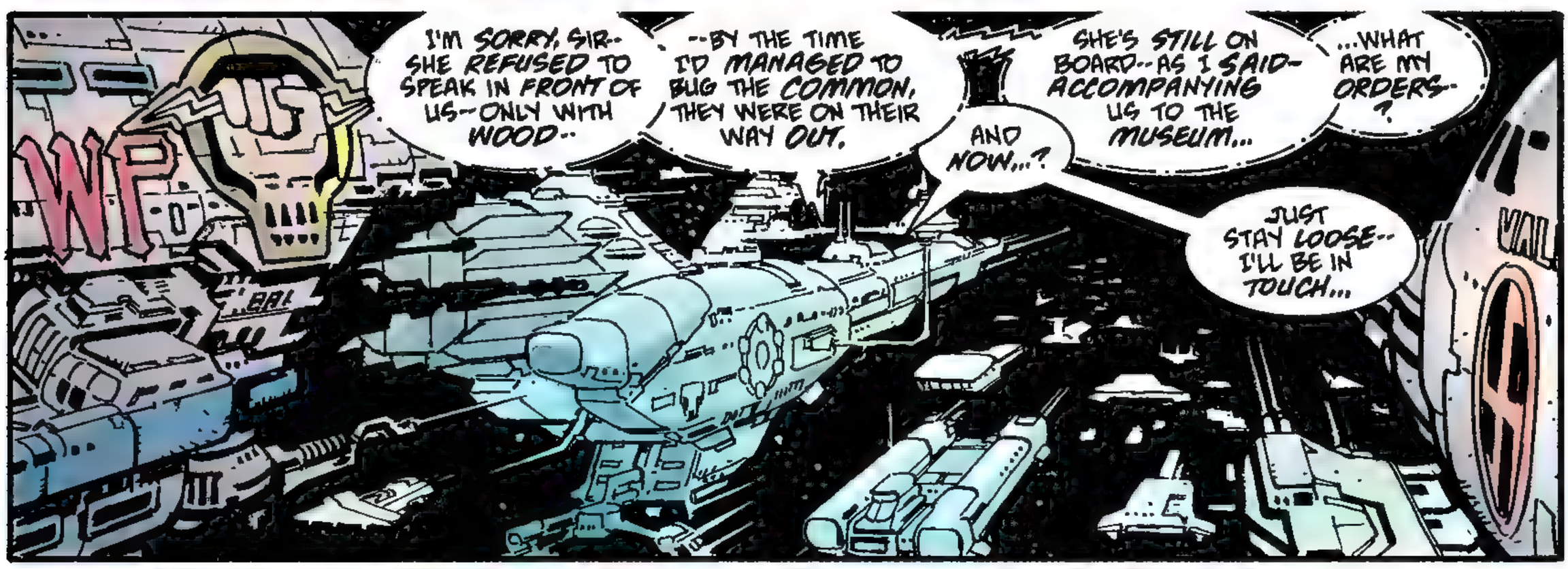
...TO TAKE THE FIRST STEPS TO END THE PLAGUE OF ETERNITY.

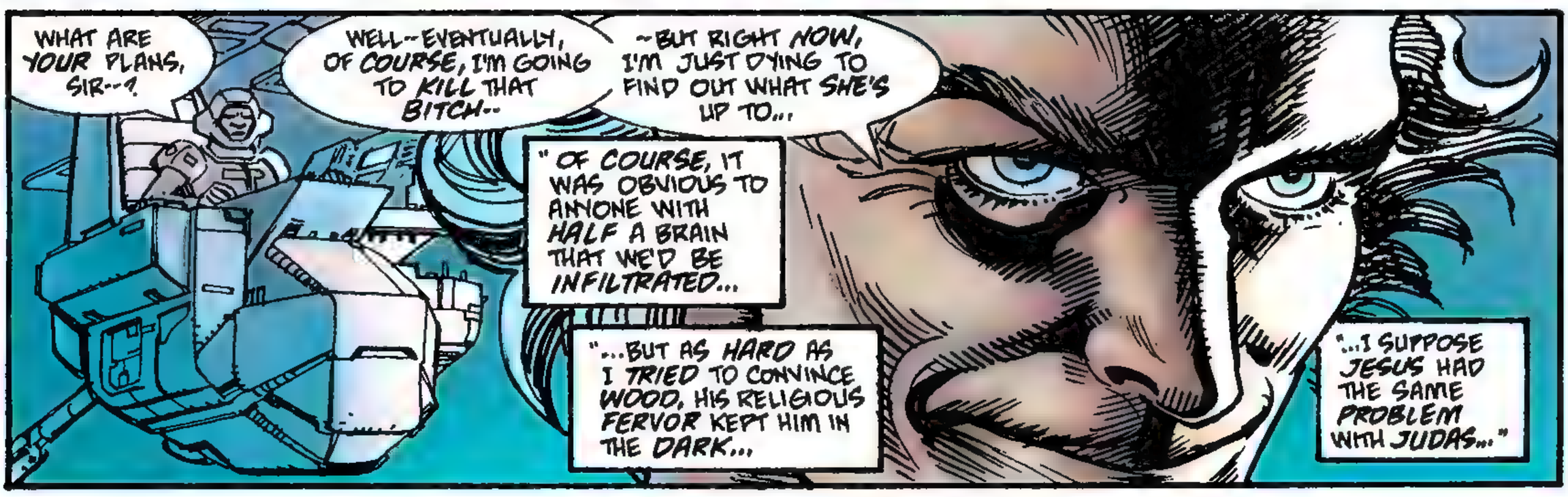
"BASED ON THAT SWEATY UPPER LIP OF HIS..."

"...IT WAS GOING TO BE ONE LONG TRIP FOR THE SELF-RIGHTEOUS LITTLE PRIG."


...TO END THE PLAGUE OF ETERNITY.
"AND SPEAKING OF SELF-RIGHTEOUS PRIGS..."
THAT BITCH...
...I WISH THAT SHE WOULD DIE--


--SO THAT I COULD CRUISE THE ROAD MYSELF.
I'M AFRAID I DON'T QUITE UNDERSTAND, SIR--
--SHALL I KILL HER--?
NO, NO--
--I ONLY WISH YOU COULD HAVE FOUND OUT MORE...


I'M SORRY, SIR-- SHE REFUSED TO SPEAK IN FRONT OF US--ONLY WITH WOOD--
--BY THE TIME I'D MANAGED TO BUG THE COMMON, THEY WERE ON THEIR WAY OUT.
AND NOW...?
SHE'S STILL ON BOARD--AS I SAID-- ACCOMPANYING US TO THE MUSEUM...
...WHAT ARE MY ORDERS--?
JUST STAY LOOSE-- I'LL BE IN TOUCH...


WHAT ARE YOUR PLANS, SIR--?
WELL--EVENTUALLY, OF COURSE, I'M GOING TO KILL THAT BITCH--
--BUT RIGHT NOW, I'M JUST DYING TO FIND OUT WHAT SHE'S UP TO...
"OF COURSE, IT WAS OBVIOUS TO ANYONE WITH HALF A BRAIN THAT WE'D BE INFILTRATED...
"...BUT AS HARD AS I TRIED TO CONVINCE WOOD, HIS RELIGIOUS FERVOR KEPT HIM IN THE DARK...
"...I SUPPOSE JESUS HAD THE SAME PROBLEM WITH JUDAS..."

"BUT THEN, JESUS DIDN'T HAVE TO CONTEND WITH HIS DAD STICKING HIS NOSE INTO EVERYTHING..."

PLEASE, LORD, LET HER SPEAK

THANK YOU, LADY.

IT CAN COME AS NO SECRET TO YOU--IN YOUR INFINITE WISDOM--

--THAT, AS MANKIND HAS ACHIEVED ITS GREATEST DREAM--

--A NEARLY INFINITE LIFESPAN...

...WE HAVE, IN TURN SACRIFICED A CERTAIN--HUMANITY--IF YOU WILL...

I BEG TO...

CONTINUE PLEASE.

...AND HAVE LANGUISHED INTO A STATE OF MORAL DECADENCE.

THANK YOU, BRENDA, MOLLER..

"I'D BEEN WAITING FOR THIS..."

WHAT ARE YOUR FEELINGS ON THIS MATTER?

YOU KNOW DAMNED WELL WHAT I THINK, KAREL--

--I COMPLETELY AGREE WITH BRENDA--

--AND I DO BELIEVE THAT IMMORTALITY HAS LONG OUTLIVED ITS WELCOME...

APPARENTLY MANY ALIVE AGREE WITH YOU...

...I WONDER, THEN, WHY WE HAVEN'T SEEN A RASH OF SUICIDES?

OH, BUT WE HAVE, YOUR GRACE--

--THEY HAVE BEEN DISGUISED AS HOLY WARS...

SACRILEGE!!

"SYCOPHANTIC SUCK UP..."

OH, SHUT UP, FENTON--I WILL HEAR THIS...

GO ON, MY DEAR. WHAT WOULD YOU HAVE ME DO...?

"EVEN WHEN SHE GOT INTO HER GOOD WITCH OF THE NORTH MODE...

"...YOU CAN STILL SEE WHY I LOVED KAREL, ONCE UPON A TIME..."

THE SOULS--THE VERY ESSENCE OF THE METHUSELOIDS...

...ABSORBED BY YOU IN YOUR ASCENSION..

--THESE CREATURES HAVE NEVER ACTUALLY DIED, IN A HUMAN SENSE--

--IT IS THIS FACT THAT HAS MADE OF YOU A--A--

WHAT IS IT, CHILD?

I AM SORRY, GRACE--BUT I AM A LIFELONG AGNOSTIC--

--WITH NO PARTICULAR SPIRITUAL BELIEF IN YOU AS A LIVING GOD...

...SUFFICE IT TO SAY, MY EMPLOYERS WISH YOU TO VISIT THEIR WORLD...

...THAT THE SOULS OF THE METHUSELOIDS MAY BE RETURNED IN PEACE...

...AND THE PLAGUE OF ETERNITY ENDED--TO RETURN MAN'S LIFESPAN TO A REASONED BALANCE.

" IT WAS EASY TO SEE THE PASSION BRENDA INSPIRED IN MEN...

"ONE MUST RESPECT ANYONE WHO LOOKS GOD IN THE EYE AND SAYS..."

THANK YOU, DEAR--YOUR COURAGE IS EXTRAORDINARY.

...AS YOU'VE SAID, NONE OF THIS IS NEW TO ME...

GURDJIEFF TALES OF BELZEBUB

BRAILLE EDITION

...AND MY DECISION WAS MADE BEFORE YOU ARRIVED...

...I MERELY WANTED YOU TO JUDGE THE MEANS TO MY ENDS.

I WILL RETURN WITH YOU TO VISIT THESE PEOPLE...

...WITH THE INTENTION OF RESTORING A MORE REASONED BALANCE TO HUMAN LIFE.

"...I DON'T BELIEVE IN YOU."

DAMN THAT WOMAN--!!

FIRST SHE DEPRIVES ME OF MY RIGHTFUL PLACE AS MESSIAH--

HONESTLY--WHO WOULD YOU RATHER HAVE AS YOUR LIVING GOD--

--A SOLDIER--A STATESMAN--A CHARISMATIC FIGURE--

--OR THAT LITTLE SLUT JOURNALIST--GOD?!

"TOMMY ALWAYS HAD A CERTAIN DISDAIN FOR THE PRESS..."

I DON'T THINK THERE'S ANY QUESTION--

OF COURSE THERE'S NO DAMNED QUESTION ABOUT IT, ASSHOLE--

--IF I'D BEEN THE MESSIAH, LIKE I WAS SUPPOSED TO BE, WE WOULDN'T BE IN THE SHIT PILE WE'RE IN RIGHT NOW--

"...FORGETTING, OF COURSE, JUST HOW RESPONSIBLE HE WAS FOR THAT SHIT PILE..."

NOW SHE WANTS TO TAKE AWAY OUR ETERNAL LIFE--

--WELL, TO HELL WITH THAT!!

WE'RE WITH YOU ON THAT!

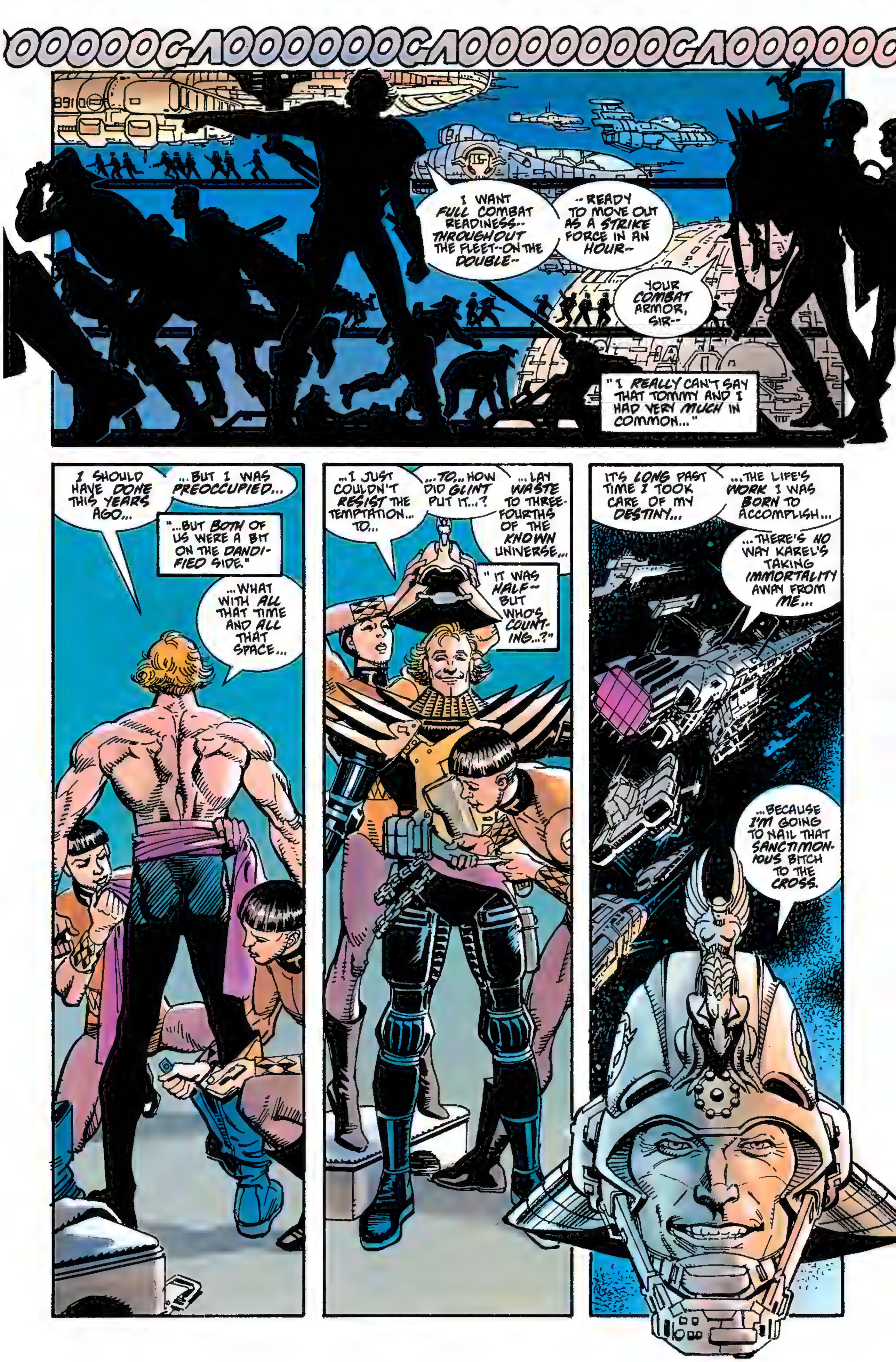
OF COURSE YOU ARE, YOU MISERABLE WRETCHES--

--I OWN YOU--ALL--AND DON'T YOU EVER FORGET IT--

NOW--SUIT UP--ALL OF YOU--FOR COMBAT--

--AND SEND IN MY BATMAN--AND MY DRESSER--

--I WANT MY BEST ARMOR--NOW--!


I WANT FULL COMBAT READINESS-- THROUGHOUT THE FLEET--ON THE DOUBLE--
--READY TO MOVE OUT AS A STRIKE FORCE IN AN HOUR--
YOUR COMBAT ARMOR, SIR--
"I REALLY CAN'T SAY THAT TOMMY AND I HAD VERY MUCH IN COMMON..."
I SHOULD HAVE DONE THIS YEARS AGO...
...BUT I WAS PREOCCUPIED...
"...BUT BOTH OF US WERE A BIT ON THE DANDIFIED SIDE."
...WHAT WITH ALL THAT TIME AND ALL THAT SPACE...
...I JUST COULDN'T RESIST THE TEMPTATION... TO...
...TO... HOW DID GLINT PUT IT...?
...LAY WASTE TO THREE-FOURTHS OF THE KNOWN UNIVERSE...
"IT WAS HALF-- BUT WHO'S COUNTING...?"
IT'S LONG PAST TIME I TOOK CARE OF MY DESTINY...
...THE LIFE'S WORK I WAS BORN TO ACCOMPLISH...
...THERE'S NO WAY KAREL'S TAKING IMMORTALITY AWAY FROM ME...
...BECAUSE I'M GOING TO NAIL THAT SANCTIMONIOUS BITCH TO THE CROSS.

"SO--THE PLAYERS WERE ON THEIR *MARKS*--CARDS *DEALT*...

"...*BUT*--WITH MANKIND STRETCHED *OUT* ALL ACROSS THE GREAT *OUT THERE*...

"...*OTHER* PLAYERS, *IGNORANT* OF THESE DECISIONS, *CONTINUED* ON THEIR *JOURNEYS*...

"...ON *RORVIK'S* WORLD, FOR *INSTANCE*--A MINOR BACK-WATER PLANET--UNALLIED AND UNALIGNED WITH *ANY* OF THE VARIOUS TERRAN *CONFEDS*..."

ERRRAASSHHH!!!

THU DDDDDDD!!!

WHAT DO YOU *EXPECT*, EARTHER..

--POLKA DOTS AND *MOON-BEAMS*...?

KARRAKKKSCSCUHHHH!!!

NO--BUT I HAD NO IDEA *THIS* KIND OF REIVER SOCIETY HAD SURVIVED *THIS* LONG *WITHOUT* TAMING...

IT'S A *LONG* WAY FROM EARTH--*ANY* EARTH--

--WE MAKE OUR *OWN* LAWS HERE...

IGNORE 'EM, *TOO*, I *SEE*...

IT'S A *HARD* LIFE--WHAT CAN I *DO* FOR *YOU*...?

I'VE *TRAILED* A FELON OUT *HERE*--

--AND I'M *SURE* HE'S GONE INTO YOUR *OUTBACK*--

AND YOU WANT *ME* TO GO AND *GET*--

NOT *QUITE*--I WANT *YOU* TO GUIDE *ME*--

Snort!! BRING 'EM BACK *ALIVE*, HUH--?

CRASH

YOU GOT *ANY* IDEA WHAT THE OUTBACK IS *REALLY* LIKE--?

THAT'S *BLOOD* LEGION TERRITORY...

I'M PAYING ONE *THOUSAND* GIRAUD/*CRYSTAL*--

IT'S *YOUR* MONEY--AND *YOUR* FUNERAL--

--BUT IF *I* DON'T TAKE IT--SOME *OTHER* FOOL *WILL*...

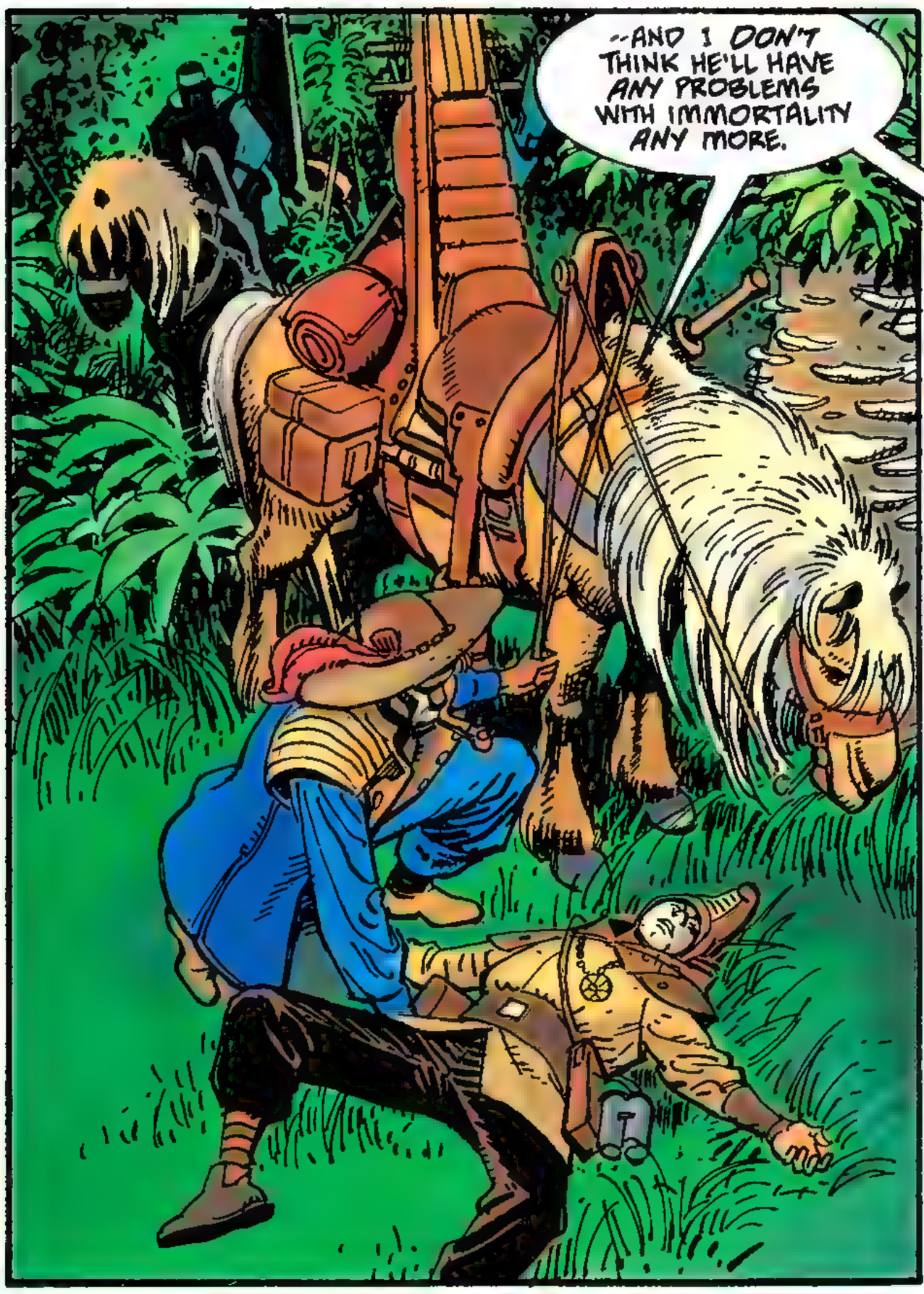
"BEFORE IT BECAME A FESTERING POOL OF THE LOWER ELEMENTS OF INTERSTELLAR SOCIETY, RORVIK'S HAD BEEN A SCIENTIFIC EXPERIMENTATION STATION...

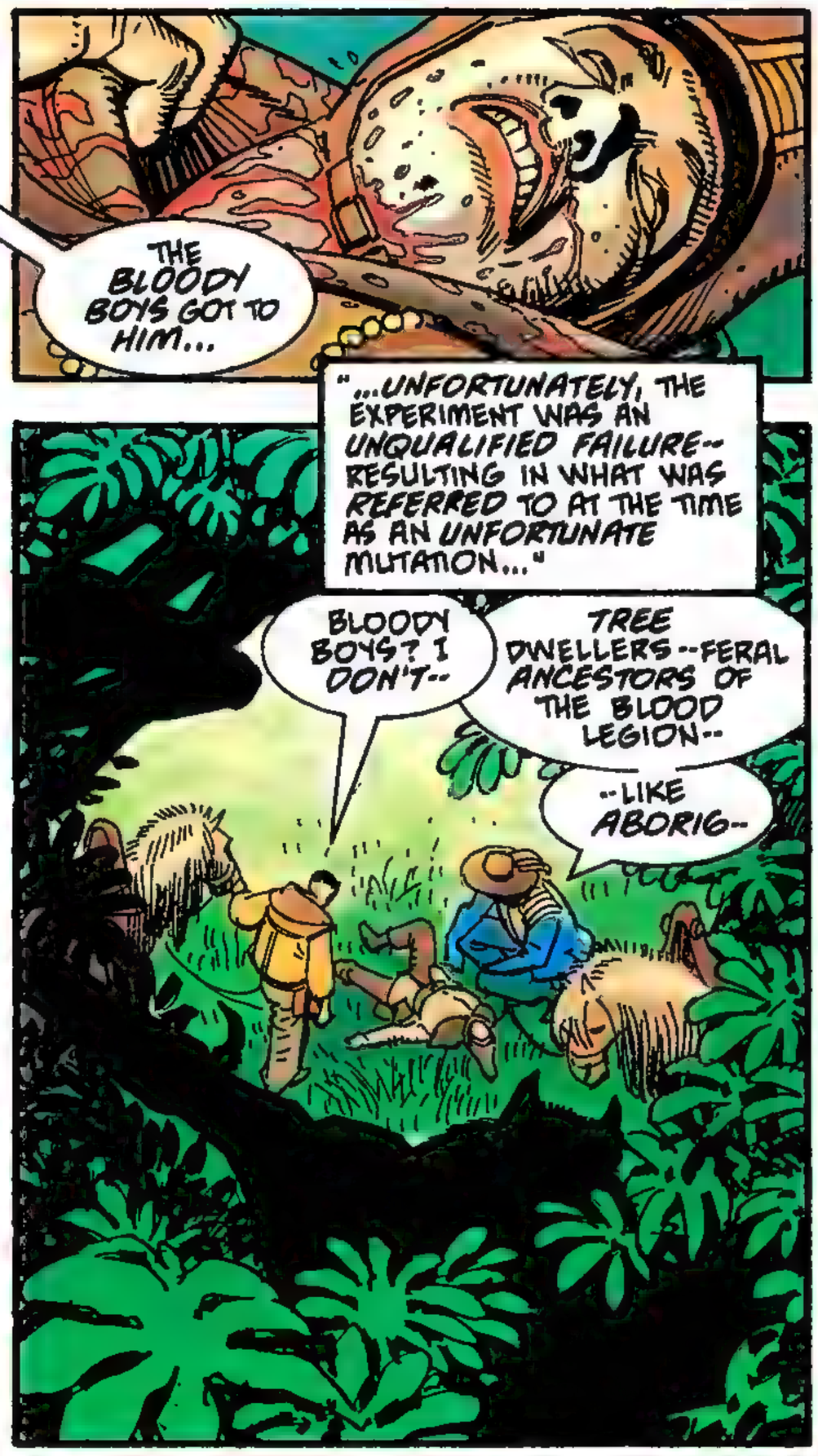
"...ONE OF THE FIRST PLACES THEY TRIED THE SYNTHESIZED METHUSELOID FLESH...ON HUMAN GUINEA PIGS..."

HOW COME THIS HERETIC IS SO IMPORTANT TO YOU--

--YOU A RELIGIOUS FANATIC...?

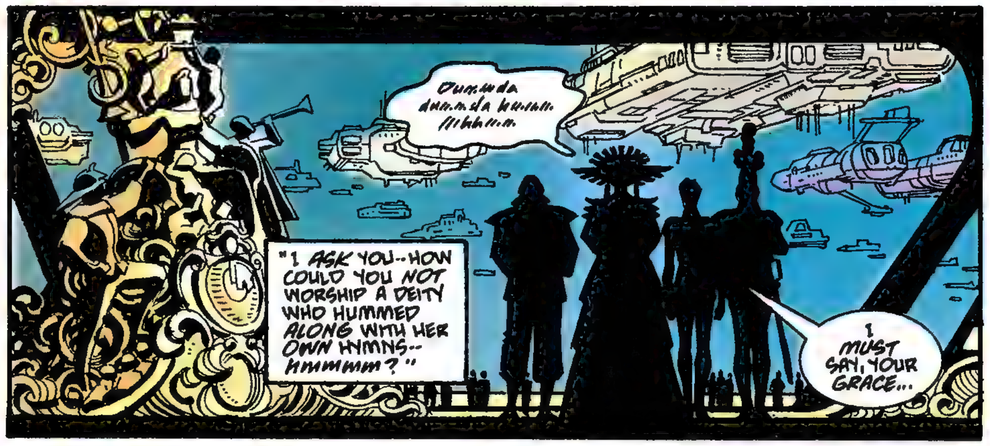
NOT A CHANCE--

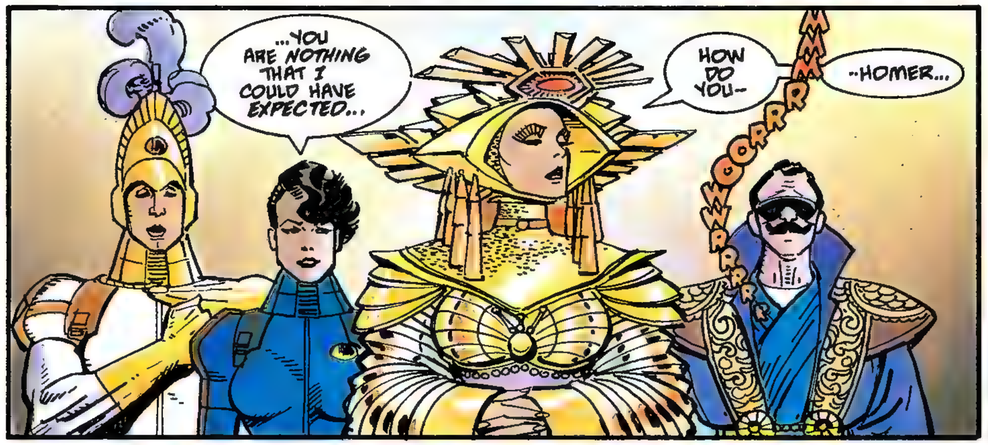




AWOOOOOOOOOOOOOOO-AWWWOOOOOOOOO
"...CREATING A RACE OF VAMPIRES...
"...SOME OF WHOM BECAME ADJUSTED MEMBERS OF SOCIETY...
"...I BELIEVE, IN ONE SECTOR, THEY EVEN BECAME AN ELITE GUARD--OR SOME SUCH
"...THE ONES WHO STAYED BEHIND ON RORVIK'S NEVER REALLY EVOLVED BEYOND THE FERAL STAGE...
"...AND THAT'S WHERE THE VAN HELSING/ CALICOS CAME IN...
"...CROSS BRED FROM WOLVES AND MEN, DEVELOPED SOLELY AS A VAMPIRE DETERRENT..."
"...SINCE, WITHOUT SPECIFIC WEAPONS, MOST MEN DIDN'T STAND A CHANCE..."
HELP ME--I..
AWWWOOOOOOO!!AOOOOWH

AAAWWWWOOOOOOOOOO
GUH-UCCCHHH!
SPUNK-CHHHH!
GOTCHA-- YOU SON OF A BITCH--!!
"...ALTHOUGH THE MAGNUS--AN ANTI-ROBOTIC WEAPON WAS PROBABLY NOT INTENDED FOR THIS PURPOSE...
"...ONE MUST GIVE CREDIT TO HAWKINS--FOR, AT THE VERY LEAST, THINKING AHEAD."
GUH-UCCCHHH!!
SPUNCHHHH!!
DAMN YOU--
WHAT'S THAT SUPPOSED TO-
USING AN UNLICENSED WEAPON--
--YOU MEAN I DIDN'T FIGHT FAIR--?
THAT'S RIGHT--
--YOU OUTWORLDERS ARE ALL ALIKE--
--YOU TALK THIS "HARD WORLD" BULLSHIT--
--BUT WHEN IT GETS DOWN TO BRASS TACKS, IT'S ALL ROMANCE THAT COUNTS--
YOU KEEP YOUR ROMANCE--
--I'LL KEEP MY SKIN--
GRAVE ROBBING--?
JUST TAKING PROOF OF THE KILL--
--A MAN'S GOT TO EAT, YOU KNOW...





"AH, HUMANITY... HERE WE WERE... ARGUABLY THE MOST IMPORTANT HUMAN BEINGS IN MANKIND'S LONG HISTORY...

"...EMBARKED ON A JOURNEY TO DECIDE THE FURTHER COURSE OF THAT HISTORY FOR ALL TIME...

"...REDUCED TO SHORT-SHEETING BEDS AND SNOTTY BADINAGE...

"...WHILE GODDESS HUMS ALONG WITH HER OWN THEME SONG.

"YOU COULDN'T DENY IT, IF YOU TRIED...

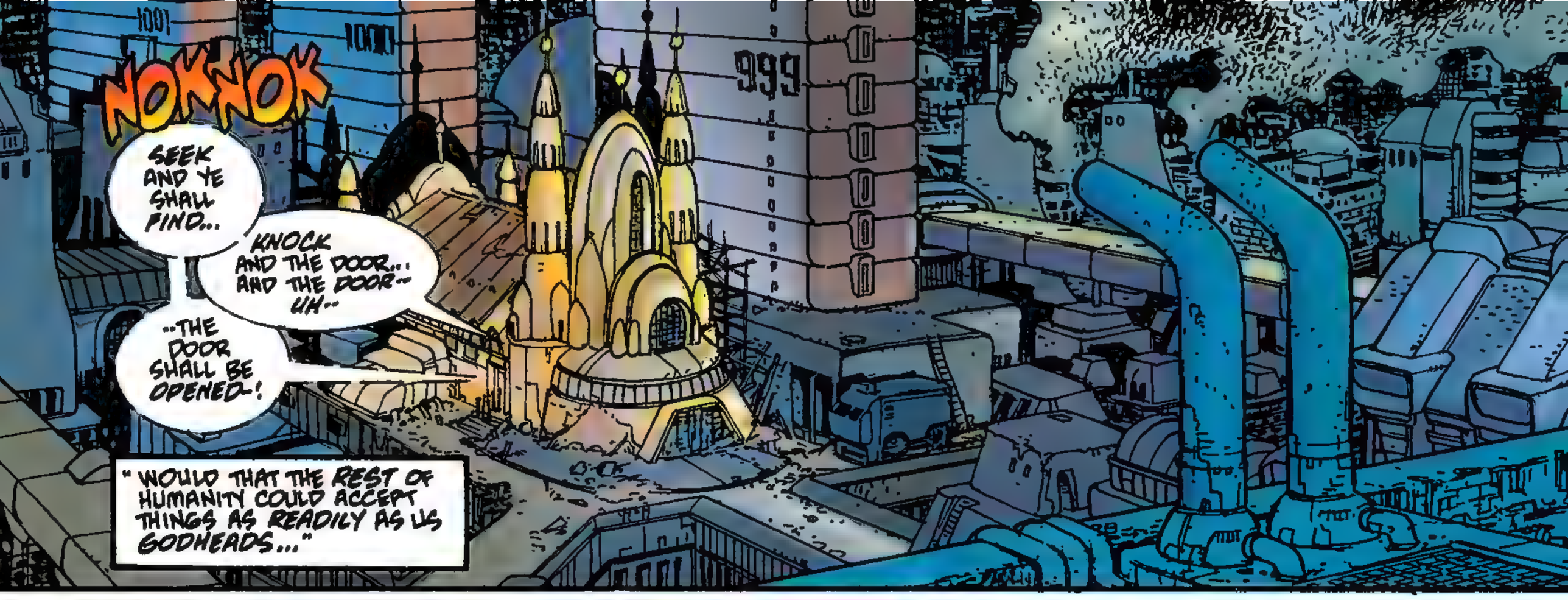
"...THE PLAGUE OF ETERNITY--THIS THOUSAND-YEAR NIGHTMARE...

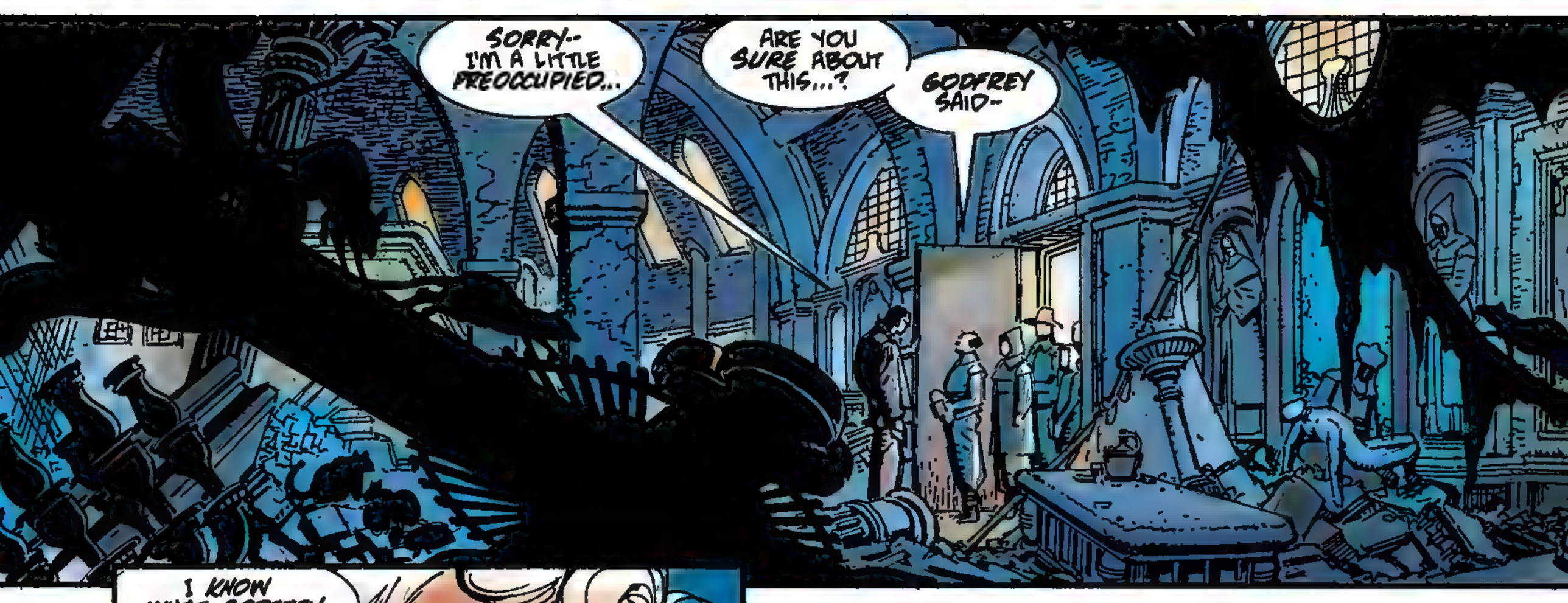
"...IT HAD SURELY DEPRIVED US OF SOME OF OUR HUMANITY...

"...BUT THERE REMAINED A CERTAIN JOY--IN THE SIMPLE DISCOVERY...

"...THAT IN TIMES OF SUCH ANXIOUS STRIFE--IT WAS OUR OWN MORTAL--OR, SHALL I SAY IMMORTAL--TERROR...

"...THAT REMINDED US OF OUR NEARLY FORGOTTEN HUMANITY."


NOKNOK
SEEK AND YE SHALL FIND...
KNOCK AND THE DOOR... AND THE DOOR-- UH--
--THE DOOR SHALL BE OPENED--!
"WOULD THAT THE REST OF HUMANITY COULD ACCEPT THINGS AS READILY AS US GODHEADS..."

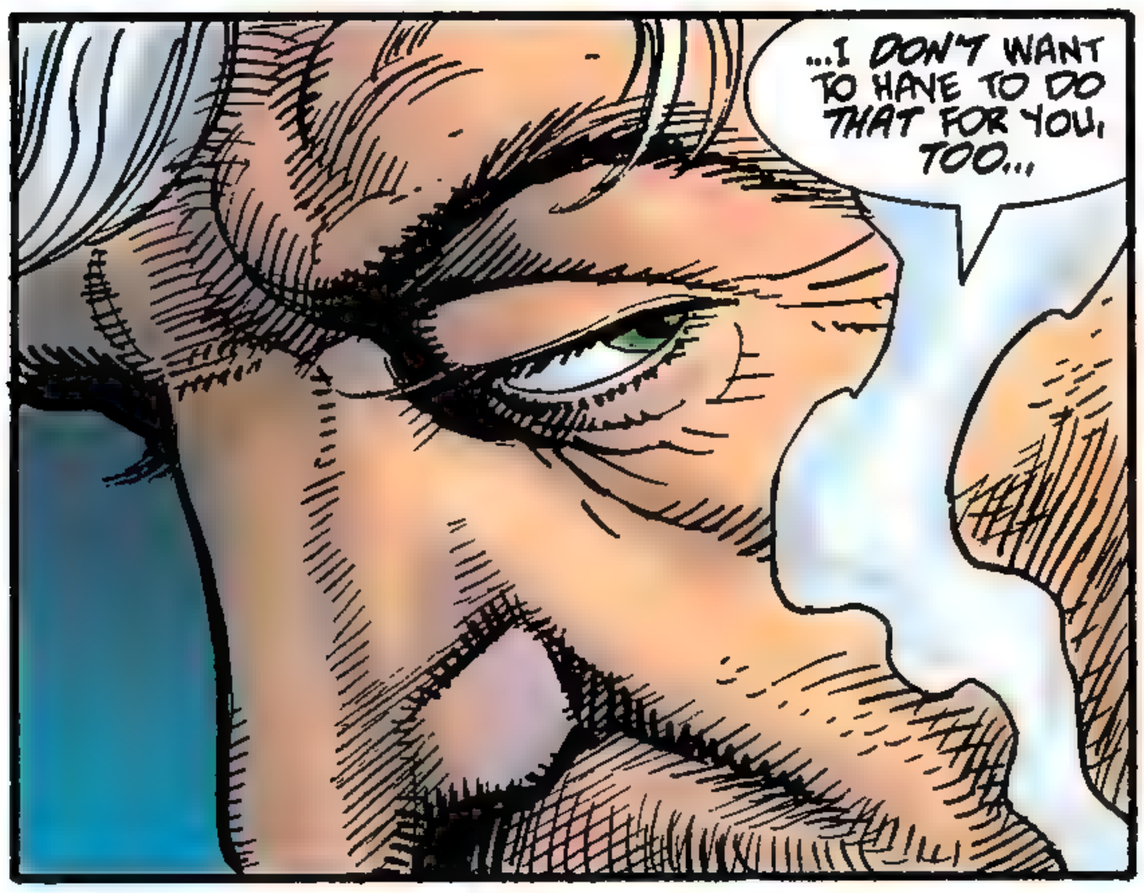

SORRY-- I'M A LITTLE PREOCCUPIED...
ARE YOU SURE ABOUT THIS...?
GODFREY SAID--

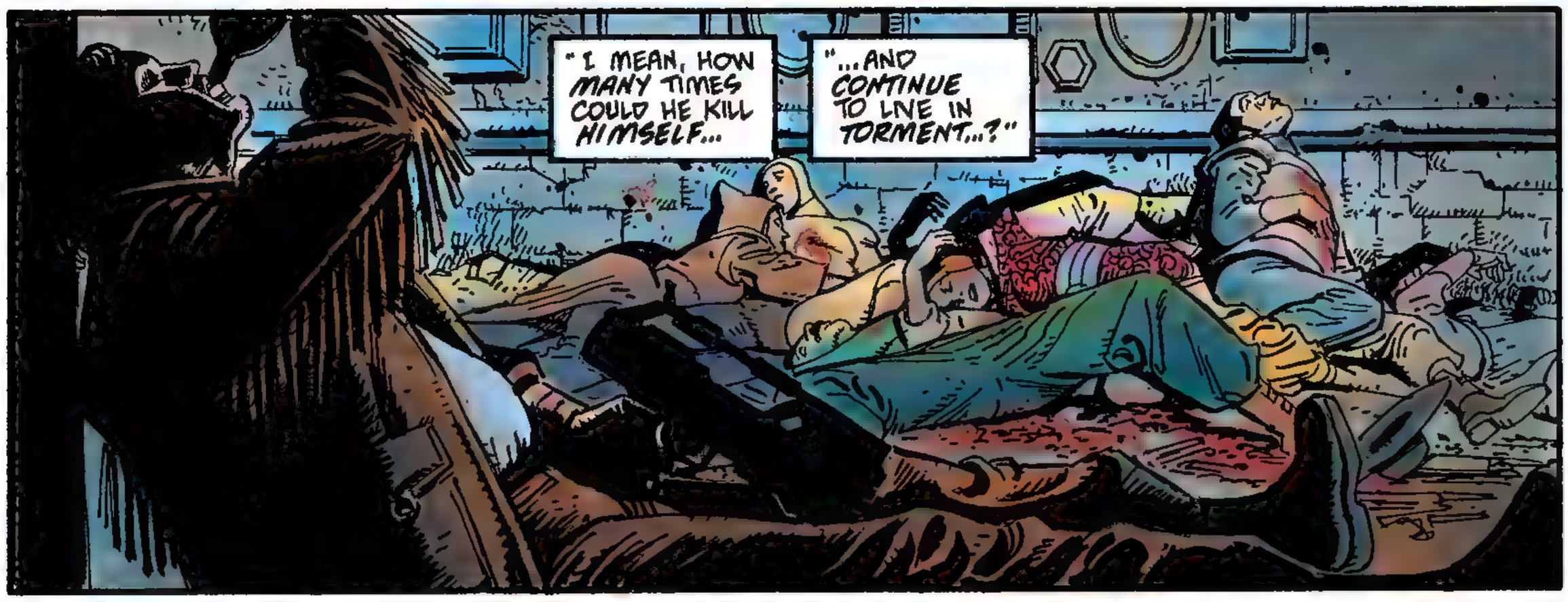
I KNOW WHAT GODFREY SAID--
--SO NOT TO WORRY--I'VE BEEN AT THIS ALL DAY...
ALL DAY...?
YOU HEARD ME-- NOW--
--I'D APPRECIATE IT IF YOU'D MAKE THIS A LITTLE EASY ON ME--

ALL DAY...?
"WHEN I HEARD, MONTHS LATER, WHAT JON HAD BEEN REDUCED TO..."
PLEASE!

"...I WEPT FOR THE FIRST TIME IN YEARS."
LINE UP AGAINST THE WALL, PLEASE...
...AGAINST THOSE PLAQUES...
OVER HERE...?

...AND CLOSE YOUR EYES...
CHUNT CHUNT CHUNT CHUNT CHUNT


...I DON'T WANT TO HAVE TO DO THAT FOR YOU, TOO...


"I MEAN, HOW MANY TIMES COULD HE KILL HIMSELF...
"...AND CONTINUE TO LIVE IN TORMENT...?"

"AND, NOT TO BE GLIB...

"... SPEAKING OF TORMENT..."

DO YOU NEVER SLEEP...?

WHA-!?!

MY APOLOGIES, SIR...

...FROM WHAT I KNEW OF YOUR EXPLOITS--

--I HAD NO IDEA YOU WERE SO EASILY STARTLED.

I AM TERRIBLY PREOCCUPIED...

...THIS MISSION-- MY GODDESS...

...THE VERY FUTURE...

IS THAT ALL...?

"WOMEN-- DON'T YOU JUST LOVE 'EM...?

"I'VE BEEN TOO DAMNED BLIND FOR TOO DAMN MANY YEARS...

"...BUT EVEN I COULD SEE THE FORCE OF WILL OL' WOOD WAS PUTTING HIMSELF THROUGH..."

I-- I

WHAT...?

I AM, GODDESS KNOWS, NO CHILD--

YES...?

I HAVE KEPT A VOW OF CHASTITY IN HER NAME FOR A MILLENNIUM...

...BUT MY FEELINGS FOR YOU...

...THEY TRANSCEND FAITH...

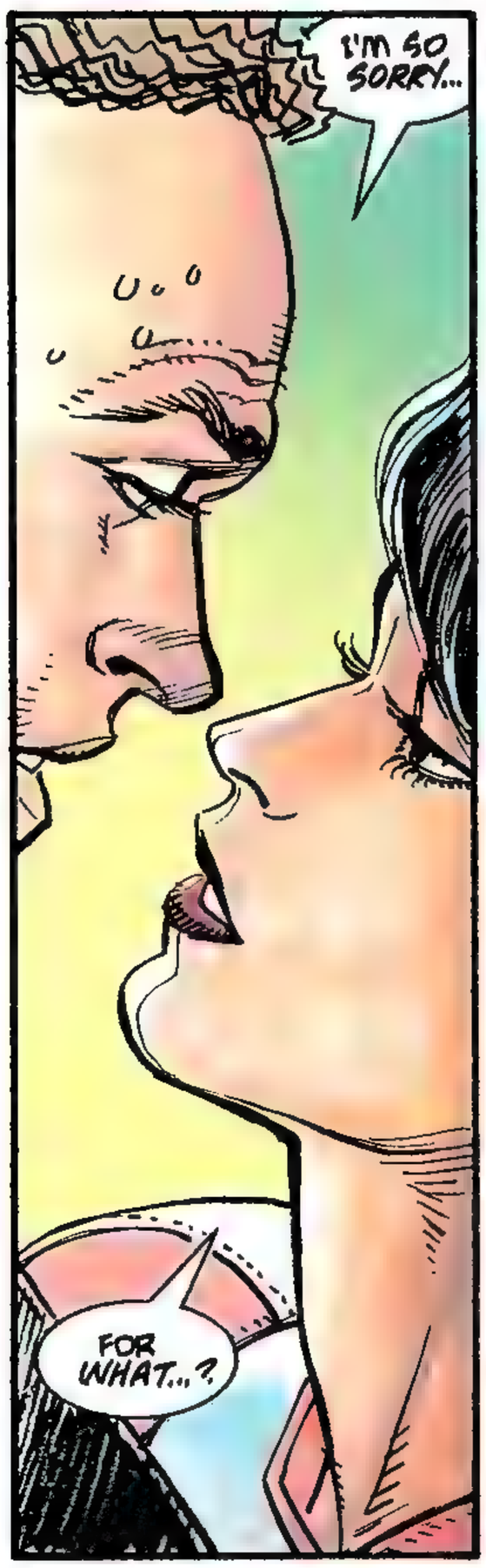
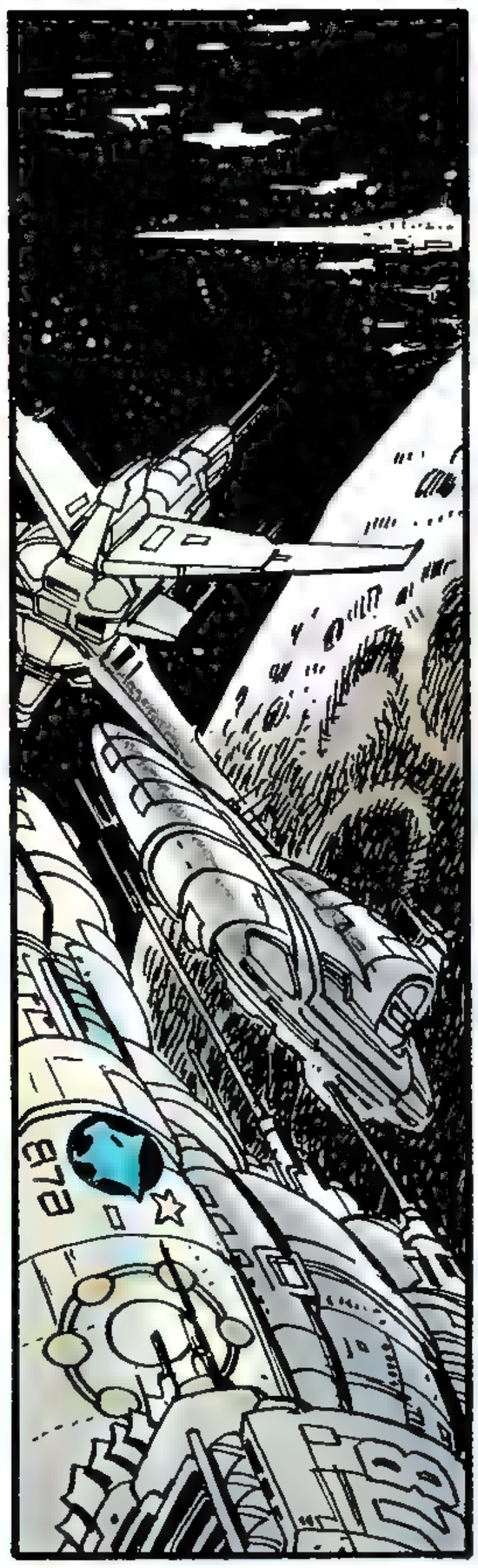
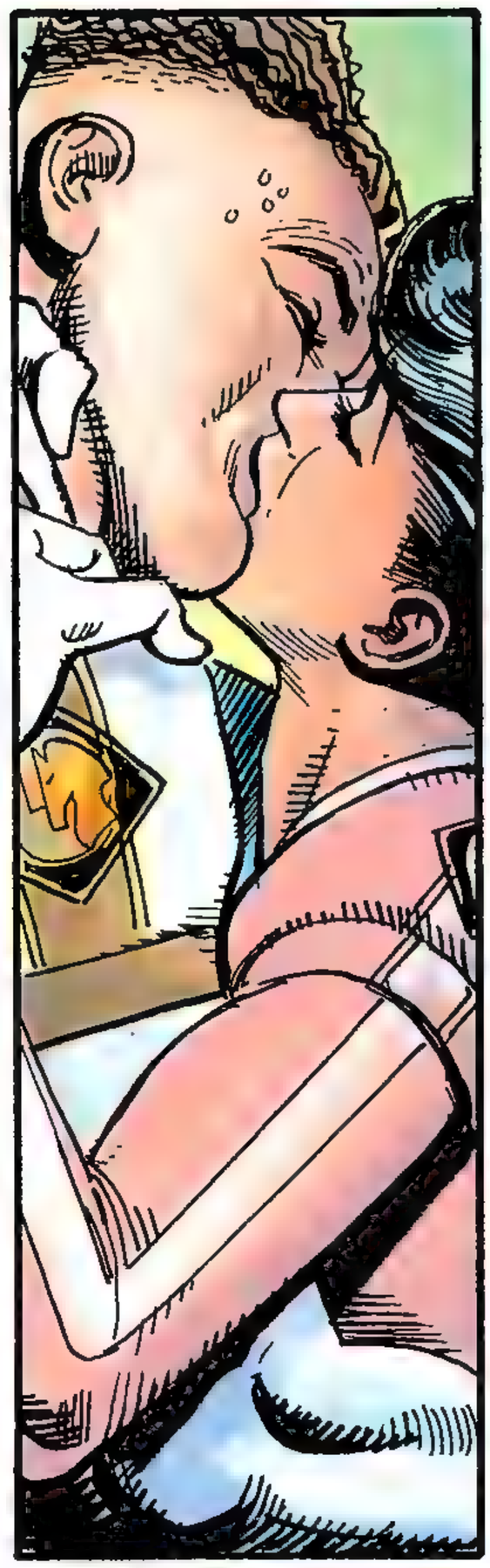
...I HAVE NEVER LOVED A WOMAN AS I LOVE MY GODDESS, KAREL-- CHASTELY...

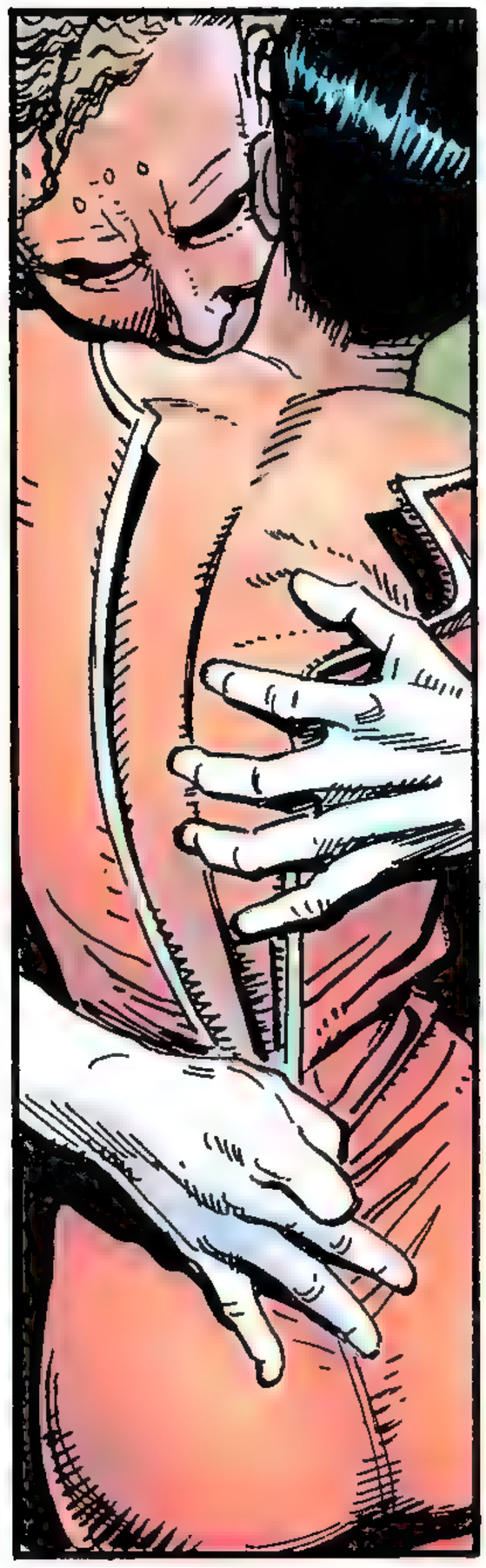
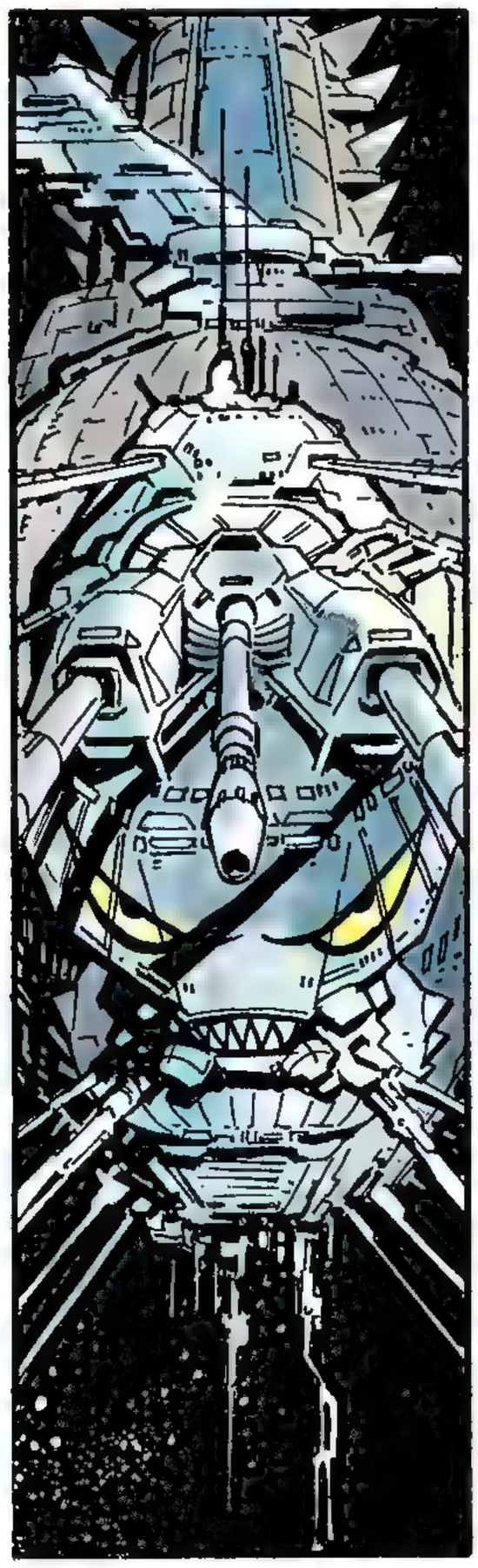
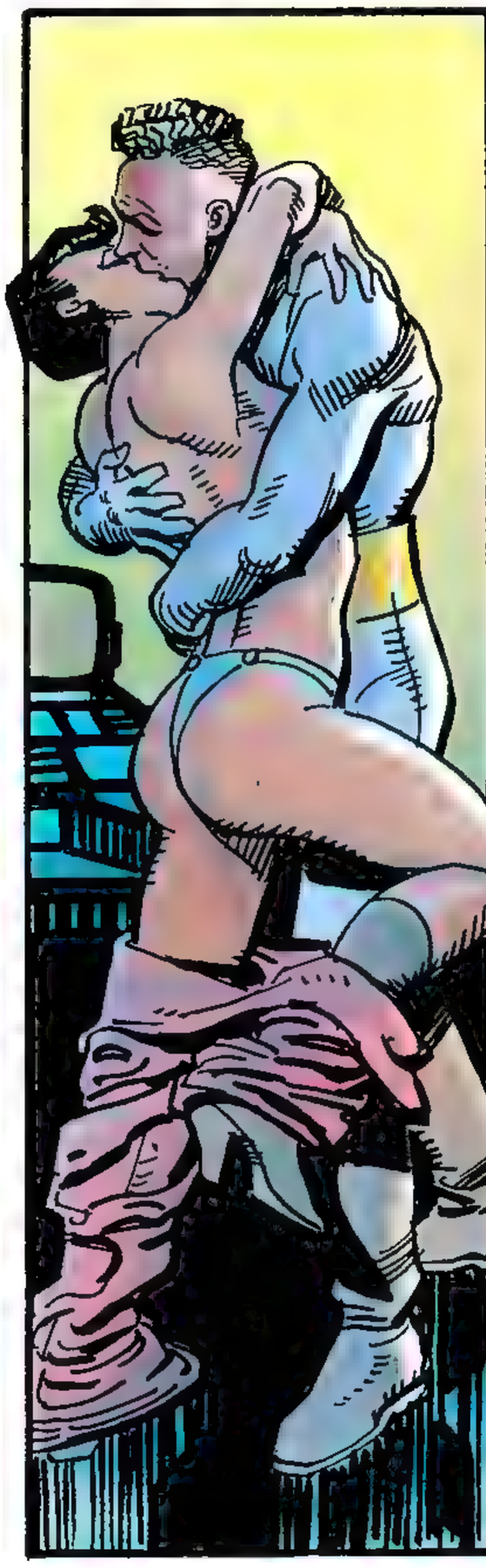
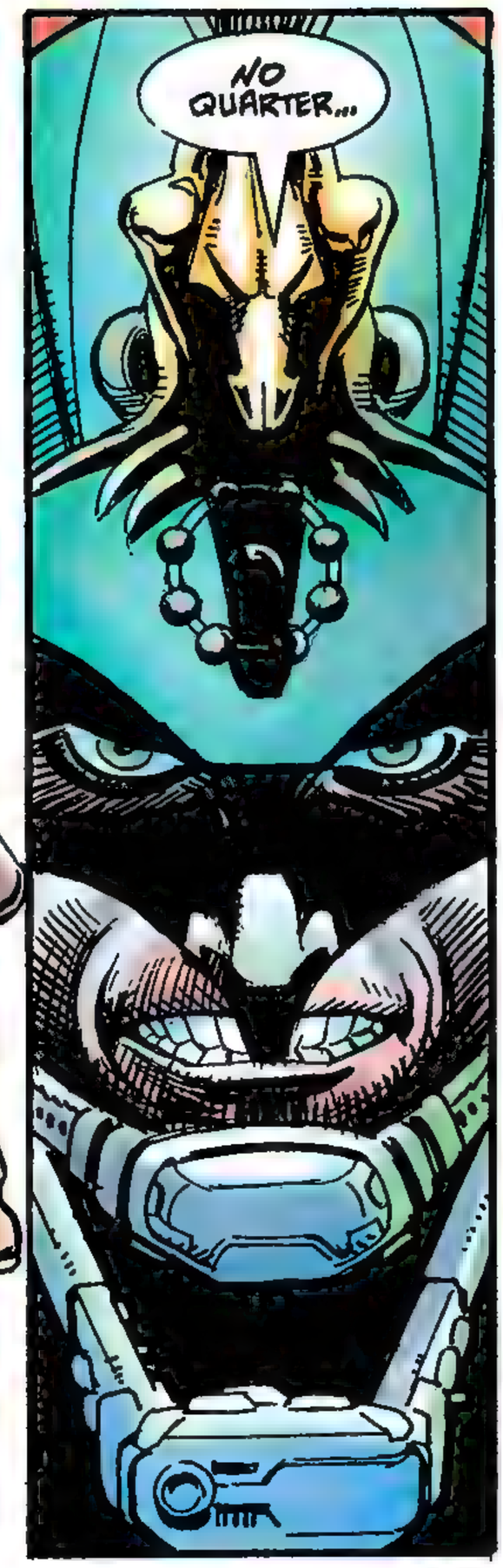
YES...?

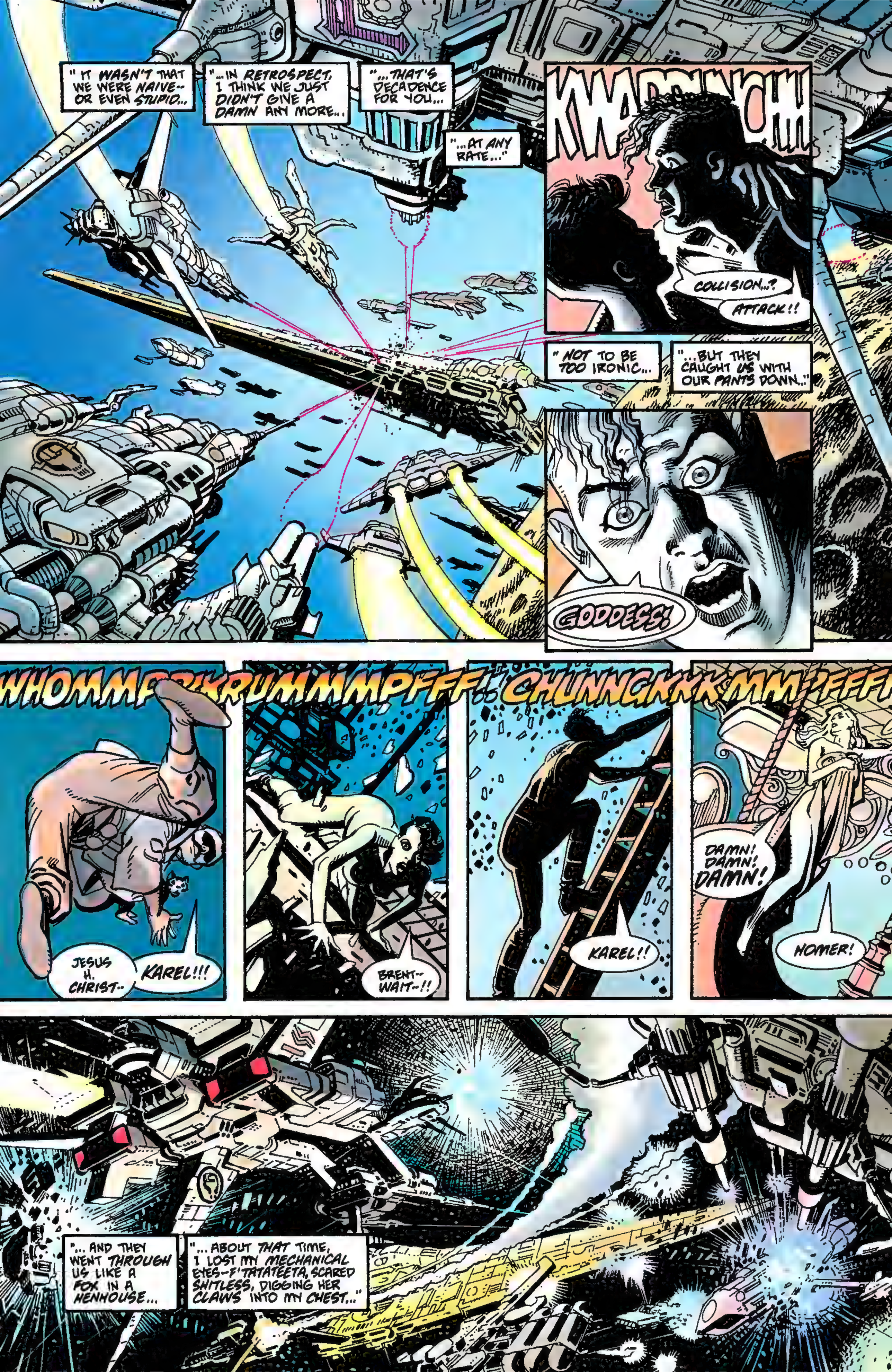
...BUT THAT CHASTE LOVE HAS... HAS...

"I THOUGHT HE'D NEVER CRACK...

"...SHOWS HOW WRONG EVEN US GODHEADS CAN BE..."


I'M SO SORRY...
FOR WHAT...?







NO QUARTER...


" IT WASN'T THAT WE WERE NAIVE-- OR EVEN STUPID...
"...IN RETROSPECT, I THINK WE JUST DIDN'T GIVE A DAMN ANY MORE...
"...THAT'S DECADENCE FOR YOU...
"...AT ANY RATE..."
KWADRINCHH
COLLISION...?
ATTACK!!
" NOT TO BE TOO IRONIC...
"...BUT THEY CAUGHT US WITH OUR PANTS DOWN..."
GODDESS!
WHOMMF
KRUMMMPFFF!
CHUNNGKKK
MMPFFF
JESUS H. CHRIST--
KAREL!!!
BRENT-- WAIT--!!
KAREL!!
DAMN! DAMN! DAMN!
HOMER!
"... AND THEY WENT THROUGH US LIKE A FOX IN A HENHOUSE...
"... ABOUT THAT TIME, I LOST MY MECHANICAL EYES--F'TATATEETA, SCARED SHITLESS, DIGGING HER CLAWS INTO MY CHEST..."

"IT HURT LIKE HELL-- BUT HEY--
"-- AS LONG AS IT HURT, I WAS ALIVE, RIGHT...?"
WHAT NOW, ADMIRAL--?
CUT HER IN TWO.
WARRRU
CHAHH
"...BLINDED AGAIN, I FELT BRENDA GRAB ME AND DRAG ME FROM MY BURNING STATEROOM...
...AND HUSTLE ME INTO ONE OF THE AIRTIGHT COMPARTMENTS..."
GOODESS!!
KAREL!
CHAKKRUNNNDDDTTTCHAKKR
GOODESS!!!
"FOR A SECOND THERE, I SAW AGAIN-- WITHOUT BIO-MECHANICAL ASSISTANCE--"
"WHEN KAREL BEGAN TO SCREAM..."
dddiiiiEEEEEE-LLRZZ

"...THAT'S WHEN EVERYTHING WENT TO HELL-- AGAIN."

FLANELLE
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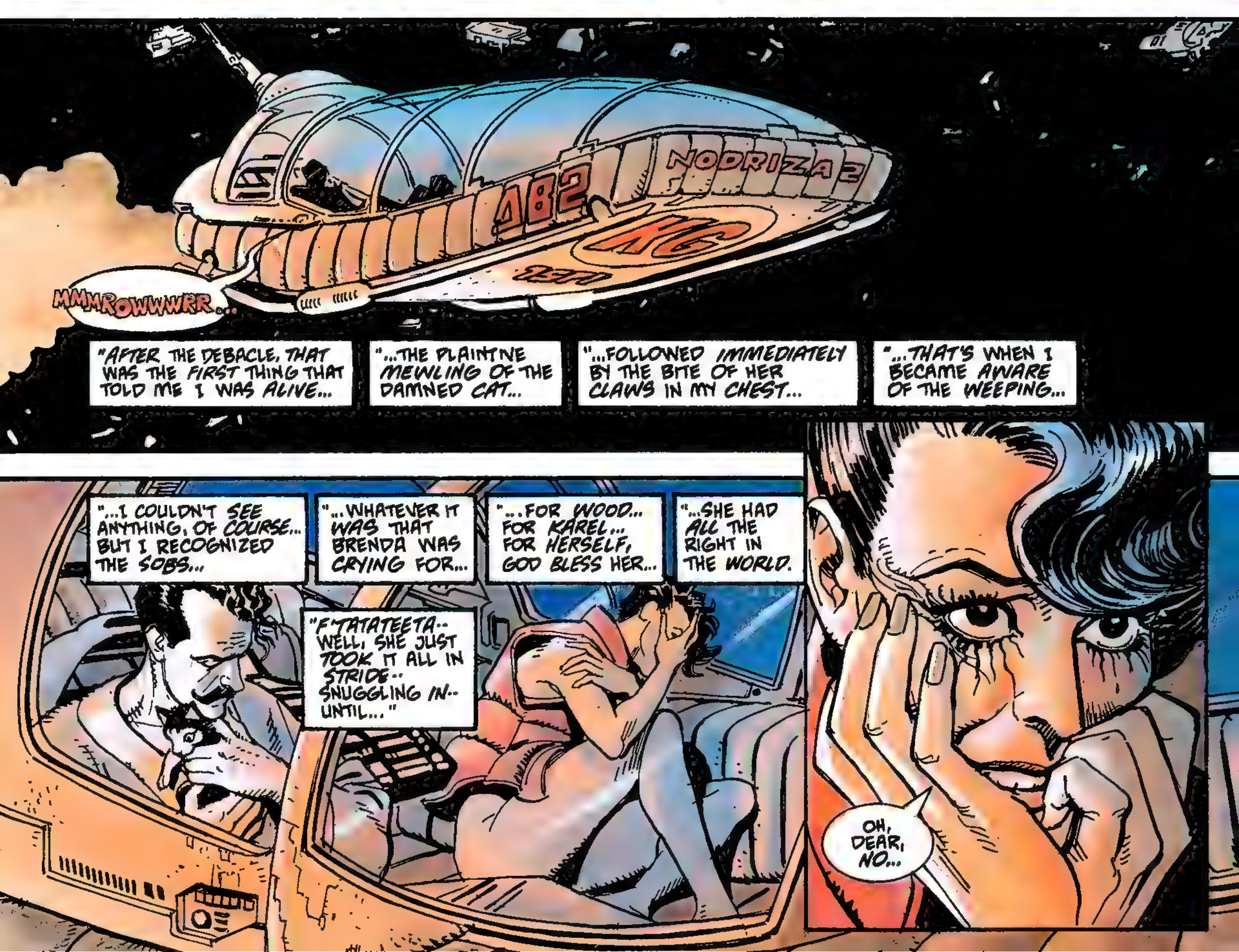

482
NODRIZA 2
MMMROWWWRR...
"AFTER THE DEBACLE, THAT WAS THE FIRST THING THAT TOLD ME I WAS ALIVE...
"...THE PLAINTIVE MEWLING OF THE DAMNED CAT...
"...FOLLOWED IMMEDIATELY BY THE BITE OF HER CLAWS IN MY CHEST...
"...THAT'S WHEN I BECAME AWARE OF THE WEEPING...
"...I COULDN'T SEE ANYTHING, OF COURSE... BUT I RECOGNIZED THE SOBS...
"...WHATEVER IT WAS THAT BRENDA WAS CRYING FOR...
"...FOR WOOD... FOR KAREL... FOR HERSELF, GOD BLESS HER...
"...SHE HAD ALL THE RIGHT IN THE WORLD.
"F'TATATEETA.. WELL, SHE JUST TOOK IT ALL IN STRIDE.. SNUGGLING IN.. UNTIL..."
OH, DEAR, NO...

WHAT IS IT...MY EYES...?

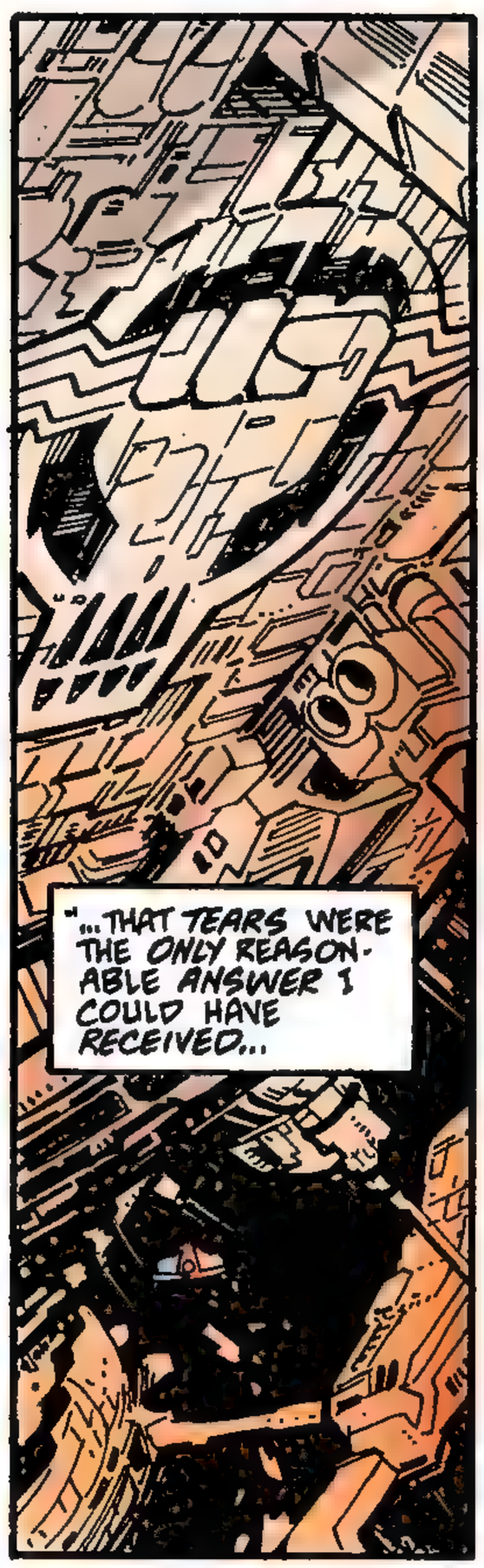
BRENDA- WHAT IS IT...?

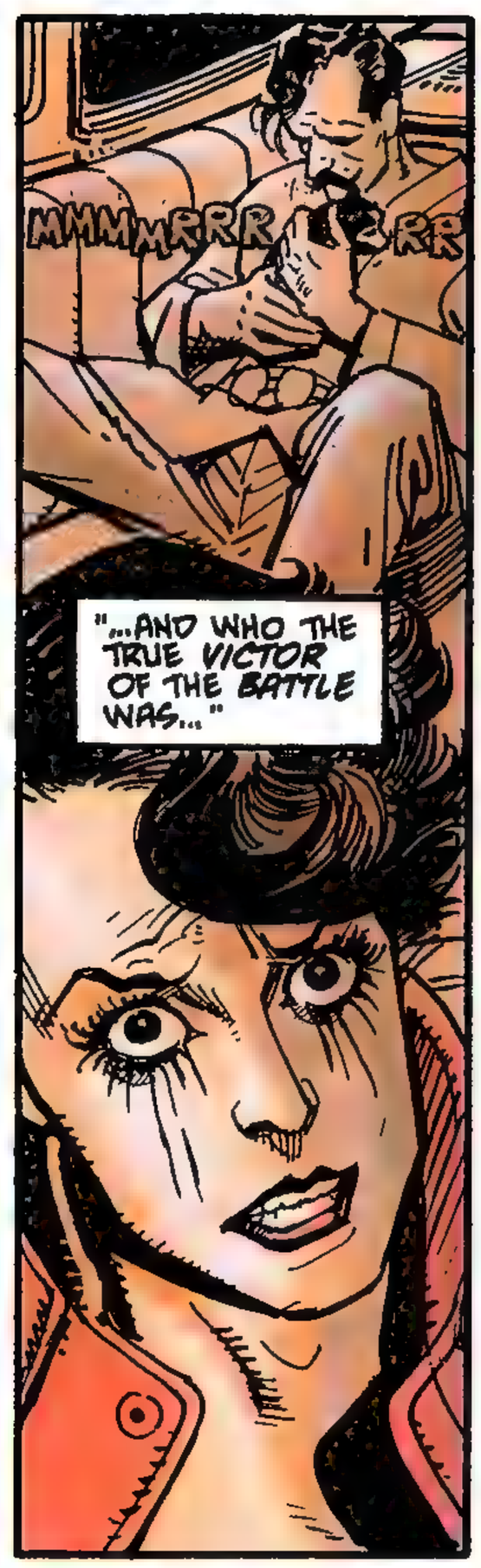
"I CAN'T REALLY SAY HOW LONG I WAITED FOR AN ANSWER...

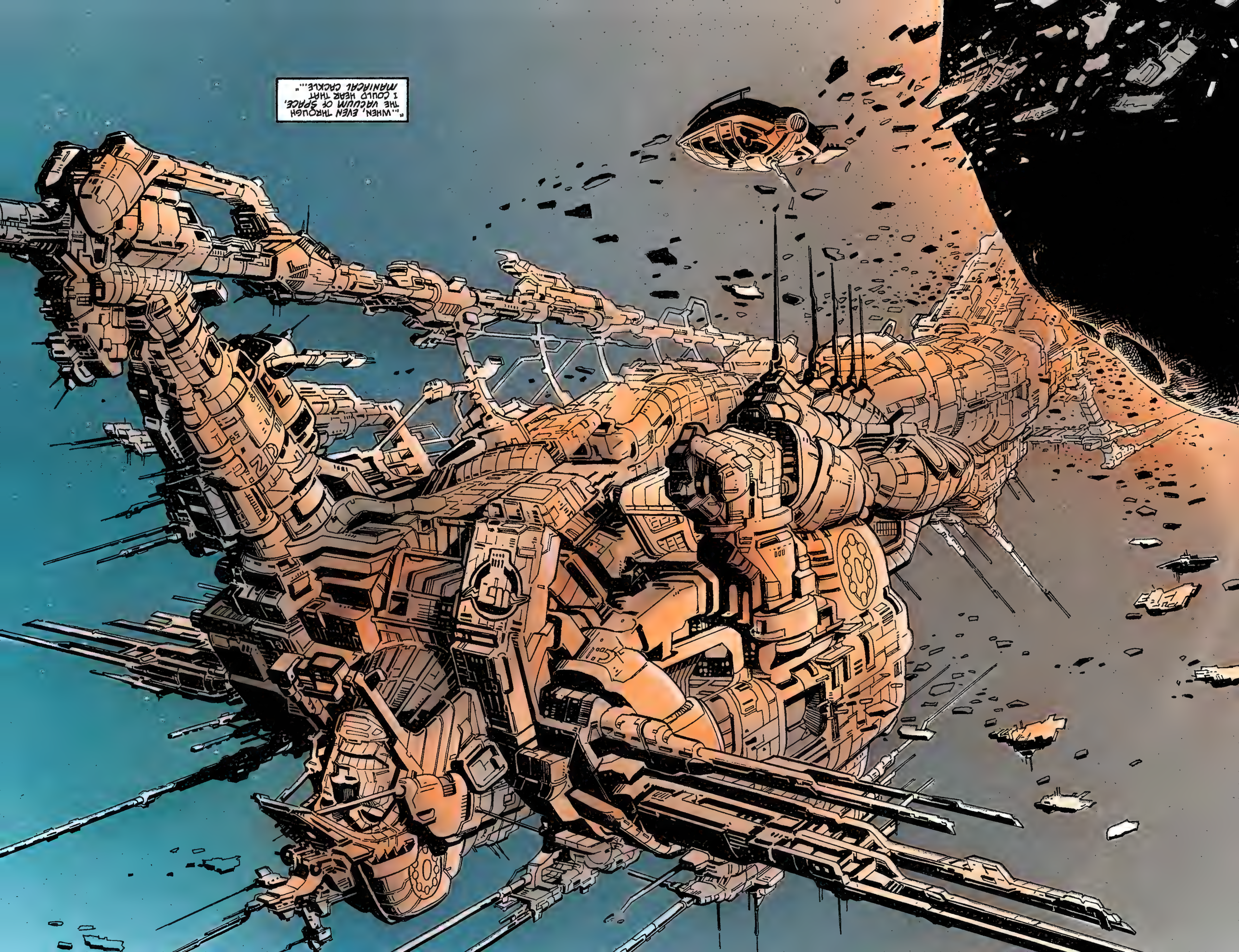
"...AN ANSWER THAT NEVER CAME...

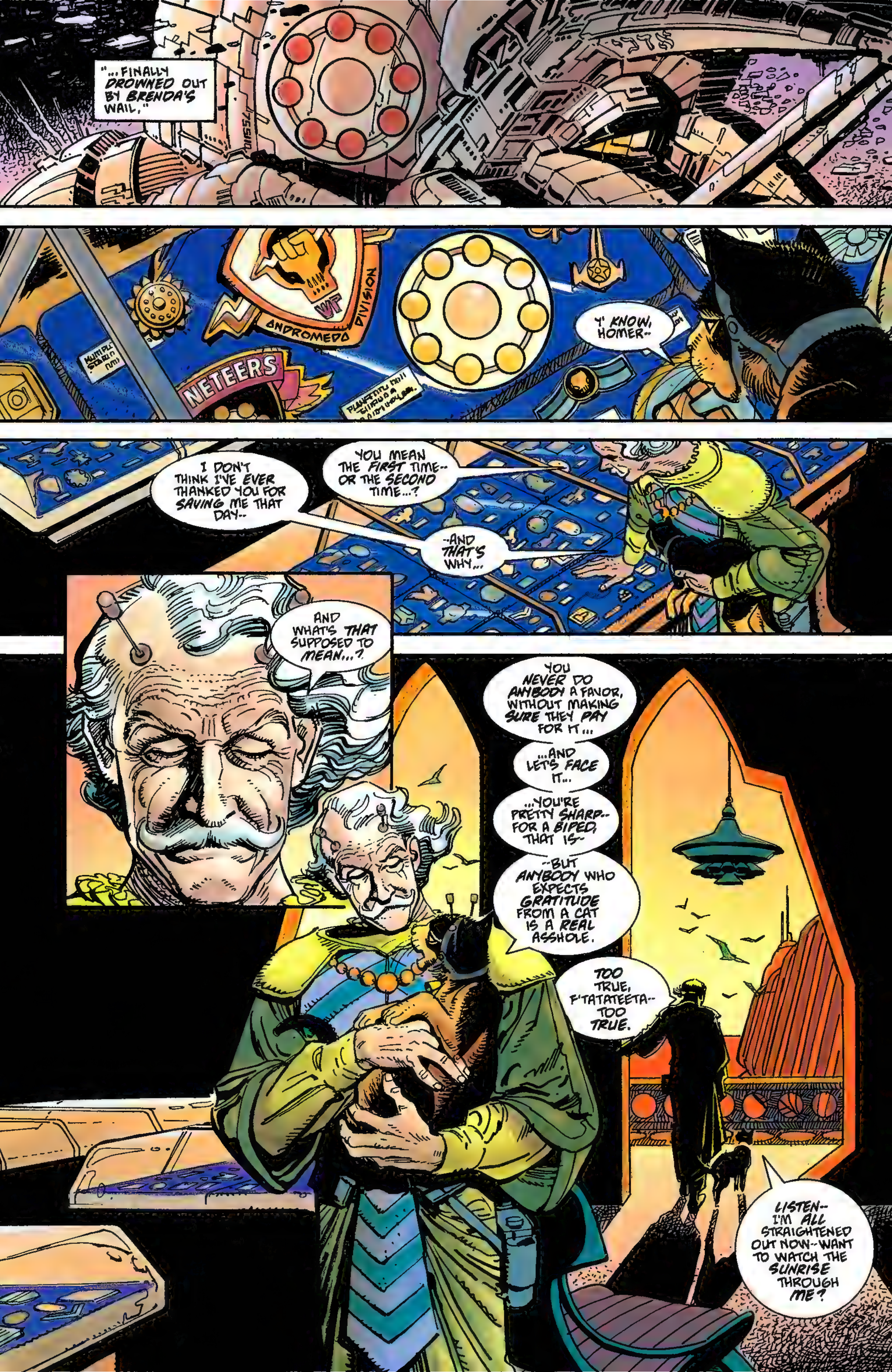
"EXCEPT FOR THE RETURN OF THOSE RACKING SOBS...

"PERHAPS I SHOULD HAVE KNOWN THEN...


"...THAT TEARS WERE THE ONLY REASON-ABLE ANSWER I COULD HAVE RECEIVED...


MMMMRRR RR
"...AND WHO THE TRUE VICTOR OF THE BATTLE WAS..."


"...WHEN, EVEN THROUGH THE VACUUM OF SPACE, I COULD HEAR THAT MANIACAL CACKLE..."


"...FINALLY DROWNED OUT BY BRENDA'S WAIL."
ANDROMEDA DIVISION
NETEERS
Y' KNOW, HOMER--
I DON'T THINK I'VE EVER THANKED YOU FOR SAVING ME THAT DAY--
YOU MEAN THE FIRST TIME-- OR THE SECOND TIME...?
--AND THAT'S WHY...
AND WHAT'S THAT SUPPOSED TO MEAN...?
YOU NEVER DO ANYBODY A FAVOR, WITHOUT MAKING SURE THEY PAY FOR IT...
...AND LET'S FACE IT...
...YOU'RE PRETTY SHARP-- FOR A BIPED, THAT IS--
--BUT ANYBODY WHO EXPECTS GRATITUDE FROM A CAT IS A REAL ASSHOLE.
TOO TRUE, F'TATATEETA-- TOO TRUE.
LISTEN-- I'M ALL STRAIGHTENED OUT NOW--WANT TO WATCH THE SUNRISE THROUGH ME?

WELL, KITTY-CAT--TO TELL YOU THE TRUTH...
...I'LL SIT OUT THERE WITH YOU...
...BUT I THINK I'LL GIVE THESE OLD EYES A REST FOR A WHILE.
clingk!
SUIT YOURSELF, OLD MAN--
--I WAS GOING TO KEEP MY EYES CLOSED, ANYHOW-- JUST WANTED TO WARM THESE TIRED OLD BONES...
...NOW I DON'T HAVE TO FEEL GUILTY FOR NOT GIVING YOU A PEEK...
LIKE YOU SAY, F'TATATEETA-- I NO MORE EXPECT GRATITUDE OR GUILT FROM A CAT--
--THAN I WOULD EXPECT MERCY FROM ANY GOD--OR GODDESS.
NOW--HOW ABOUT SHUTTING YOUR LITTLE CAT MOUTH AND LETTING AN OLD MAN TAKE A NAP-
OOOFF!
GOD DAMN IT--!!
WHAT IS IT WITH YOU--?!?
ZZZZZZZ
GOD DAMNED FOUR-LEGGED BITCH-- ASLEEP ALREADY.

◆ NEXT ◆

◆ BLOOD ◆

ON THE

◆ STARS ◆

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